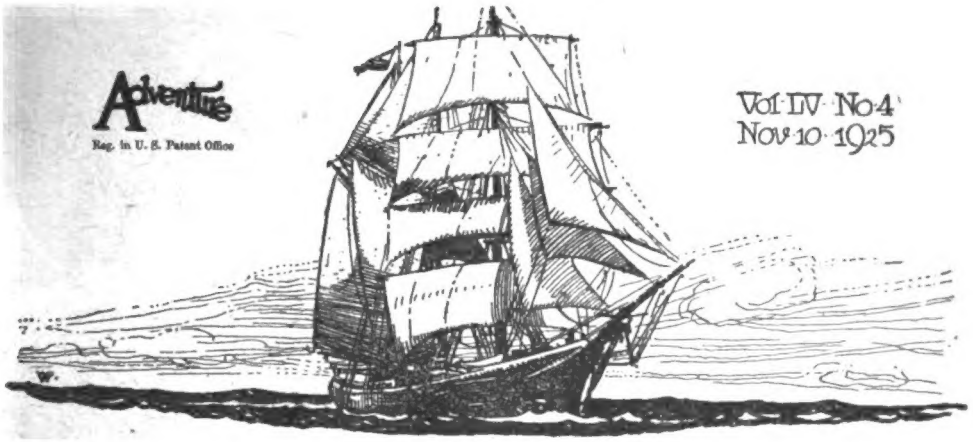

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**Occasionally one of our stories will be called an "Off-the-Trail" story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of magazines, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved.*

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Headings . . . . . **R. Westmacott**

Cover Design . . . . . **James McNeill**

Three Complete Novelettes

THE scaffold of the guillotine loomed darkly against the gray prison wall, but ***Ponpon*** was too good a man to die. "THE RED SHADOW," a story about the Apaches of Paris by Georges Surdez, appears as a complete novelette in the next issue.

THE grim, forbidding mass that is La Farrère had a strange fascination for the slim Portuguese. The crew thought it was gold—but the old *mamaloi* knew better. "ONE HAITIAN NIGHT," a complete novelette by William P. Barron, will appear in the next issue.

THE name of *Stenka Razin* spelled terror to all folk from Muscovy to Persia. To Astrakhan, the very center of his vast hunting grounds, came *Mark* and *Uncle Kosta*. "MARK OF ASTRAKHAN" is a complete novelette by Harold Lamb in the next issue.

Other stories in the next issue are forecast on the last page of this one.

***Adventure* is out on the 10th, 20th and 30th of each month**

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Nov. 10. 1925

THE GOVERNOR OF CAP HAITIEN

A Complete Novelette

By T. S. Stribling

Author of "Fombombo," "The Refugees," etc.

THE trig gentleman with that slightly foreign flavor so characteristic of Americans nowadays sat in the steamer chair next by one to that of Mr. Henry Poggioli, and called across the chronically seasick woman who separated them to wager, he said, dollars to doughnuts that the American marines would be recalled over there within six months. With the "over there," he indicated by a motion of his cigaret the landfall of Haiti, which lay like an opalescent mist on their starboard.

Mr. Poggioli, who was interested perhaps too strictly in the racial psychology of the West Indian Islands and not sufficiently in their politics, presently admitted his ignorance of the fact that the American marines had been withdrawn.

At this the trig gentleman glanced at the psychologist, then silently but obviously made a revaluation of Mr. Poggioli's acquaintance. If Poggioli did not know that the American troops had been withdrawn from Haiti, then he must be nothing but a tourist—a perambulant checkbook, a pair of leveled binoculars, a clicking kodak, a human insect bewildering itself in the changing kaleidoscope of geography. The trig gentleman evidently had thought Mr. Poggioli another traveling American business man engaged in some sane enterprise here in the West Indies, but a tourist—

He replaced his cigaret between his lips with the discernible intention of ending the conversation.

"Well, they have," he stated, no longer in the tone of equal to equal, but of the

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informed to the uninformed. "I'm stopping off to close up my company's insurance offices in Cap Haitien and Port au Prince; cancel all outstanding policies and repay unearned premiums. That's what the insurance folks think about the future of the Black Republic, and the insurance boys are pretty wise fowls, brother—they weren't hatched day before yesterday."

The seasick woman gasped a desire for ice. The trig gentleman flagged the steward with cold, unsympathetic efficiency.

Mr. Poggioli said absently that he didn't doubt it. Then the insurance man's evil predictions for the future of the Haitian government brought to the psychologist's mind the odd cablegram which he had received in Curaçao and which really had started him toward Haiti. He continued thinking of it a moment, could not quite reword it and presently fumbled in his pocket and drew it out. It read:

Professor Henry Poggioli, Psyc. D. Curaçao, D. W. I.

If you are a corresponding member of the American Society for Psychological Research, report at once to Aristide Boisrond, Gov. of the Dept. of Cap Haitien, Cap Haitien, Haiti. Fees no object.

Dr. Vauquière,
Minister of Dept. Health.

It struck Mr. Poggioli now, as it had struck him when he first received it, as the most uncommunicative communication he had ever received. The thing suggested questions and answered none. Presently he asked the trig gentleman—

"Are you at all acquainted with the government officials in Cap Haitien?"

"Unpleasantly. Why?"

"I wondered what you would think of that?" He handed the cablegram over the sick lady, who never relayed anything.

The insurance man took it, and as he read his face changed.

"I thought you were a tourist!" he blurted out.

"I saw you did."

"You must pardon me, Mr. Poggioli," apologized the trig gentleman.

"No offense," assured the psychologist. "In fact, if the truth were told, I have occasionally toured myself. To India once and once to Nova Zembla. I don't uphold the practise, but I regard it with charity."

"Sure, sure," stammered the insurance man, quite discomfited. "Naturally would." He scrambled out of his *impassé* by returning to the cablegram. "I see you are a—a psychologist." He pronounced the syllables slowly. "That's a—er—a man who—m-m—weighs the soul; isn't it? I saw a notice of it once in a Sunday supplement. Picture of one coming out of a dead woman's mouth. They weigh about an ounce, don't they?"

"Something like that," agreed Poggioli, not caring to split milligrams over so simple a matter.

The insurance man nodded solemnly.

"By George, science is a wonderful thing. No telling what we'll find out in the next ten years!"

Having offered this original observation in an impressed tone, he was moved to become more closely acquainted with a genuine man of science. He leaned across the sick woman and offered a spontaneous hand.

"My name's Osterwasski, Mr. Poggioli," he said warmly. "I'm an American, too, full-blooded, I suppose, as both my parents landed in New York months before I was born. I'm always glad to meet a fellow American anywhere. In the blood I suppose. But you ought to know, you're a psychologist."

Mr. Poggioli supposed it must be in the blood, and then once more directed Mr. Osterwasski's attention to the point under discussion.

"Just what do you know about this Governor Boisrond or Vauquière?"

Osterwasski hesitated as became a discreet business man.

"I know something about Boisrond—well, about both of them."

"What is it?"

The trig gentleman cleared his throat.

"This is confidential," he said in an undertone across the sick woman, "but they are—well, they're the cat's ankles, all right."

"You mean—"

"I mean you couldn't find two worse crooks in a corkscrew factory."

Poggioli stared his amazement.

"But what in the world would a pair of rogues want with a corresponding member of the American Society for Psychological Research?"

"Are you that?"

"Yes."

The insurance man hesitated, became aware of the sick woman, got out of his chair and nodded for Poggioli to follow. They went to the ship's rail. Here Mr. Osterwasski tossed over his cigaret stub and said

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in the grave tone with which one good American warns his fellow countryman in a foreign land.

"If I was you, Poggioli, I wouldn't step off this ship."

"Why?"

He nodded at the distant island.

"That place ain't safe. Hell's li'ble to break loose over there any minute."

Poggioli nodded, waiting for something more specific.

"Besides Boisrond won't pay you anything. I've got a suit against him right now, or rather he has against my company, trying to collect fake insurance loss."

"Doesn't make much difference about his paying me," dismissed Poggioli seriously, "but danger. I'm not out hunting trouble."

"Well, unless you want to cash in your life insurance policy, I'd pass that island up if I was you."

"You're going to land, aren't you, Mr. Osterwasski?"

"Oh well, that's different. I'm out for business, you're just out for science."

"I've heard of men doing some fairly adventurous things even for science, Mr. Osterwasski."

The insurance man lifted his brows, drew his head into his shoulders slightly and spread his hands.

"Very well. I was just telling you as one American to another. You know your business. Of course it's up to you."

It was clear that while he was not exactly offended, Mr. Poggioli's decision had not been pleasing to him. He said he had some packing to do before he went ashore and, with a motion of his finger to his deck cap, turned and went to his cabin.

Poggioli watched him go, a little amused, a little thoughtful at his warning. Osterwasski's attitude of "one good American to another" struck Poggioli as droll. Yet after all, Osterwasski was an American. Just as authentic an American from the top of his head to the soles of his feet as any descendant of the Mayflower pilgrims.

He was American through elimination. He was no more a Russian Jew, simply because his parents were Russian Jews, than he was Chinese. He had the factory mark of New York's East Side, and the trade mark of lower Broadway, about the twenties, and probably owned an apartment on Riverside Drive. He could have evolved nowhere else in the world. As he said, he was an American.

Here Mr. Poggioli's thoughts veered back to the queer message in his pocket, to the rather deterring information he had just received from his fellow American and to the gloomy mountains of Haiti solidifying out of the opal mists ahead of the liner.

SOME three hours later amid the usual fanfare of bumboats, lighters, passenger dories and amphibious negro boys diving about the ship for tourists' pennies, the liner dropped anchor in Manzanilla Bay. A little later Poggioli was rowed ashore and stepped into the black world to which he had been so oddly summoned.

On a wide plank wharf amid a furnace of sunshine and the stench of raw hides and baled tobacco, Poggioli was at once beset by a rabble of black beggars and porters who swarmed about him and the other passengers, beseeching nickels and almost fighting for the privilege of carrying handbags to the custom-house.

Two stalwart blacks were pulling at the psychologist's traveling case and cursing each other in an impossible French to let go, quite as if the white man were an inanimate object without any power of choice within himself.

In the midst of this uproar two black horses hitched to a stanhope came rattling up the board wharf. The driver caught sight of the American's distress and called out in crisp French—

"Is that you, Mr. Poggioli?"

When the psychologist gasped out an affirmative, the driver, a yellow man, swung about his courageous blacks and fairly charged into the rabble. Came a general scuttling away. One of the horses bowled over a hunchback mendicant, while the rest of the crowd fled like a flock of disturbed and angry blackbirds. There was something ruthless and effective in the maneuver. Carriage and horses came to a halt beside the American. The yellow man leaped out ceremoniously.

"Allow me to introduce myself. I am Dr. Vauquière. Sorry you were annoyed by these tatterdemalions, Prof. Poggioli. The hand of our government is quite lax. One must admit it although the recent change in policing would explain that. Have you presented your bags at customs yet?"

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"No," said Poggioli, "I'll run over and do it."

"Don't walk!" implored Dr. Vauquière in a shocked tone. "Here, I'll drive you there, m'sieu."

The customs building was not more than fifty yards distant, but apparently this distance was unwalkable in Haiti. Poggioli stepped into the stanhope, the blacks clattered across the boards and drew up at the big stone custom-house which the Americans had built during their occupation of the island. At the door of this building stood an easy-going black man in uniform. Vauquière motioned to him.

"LeClerc!" he called. "Run out here and pass Dr. Poggioli's bags, will you? He's a guest of the governor's."

The black man called LeClerc nodded and advanced with a sort of dignified alacrity through the sunshine, as another door opened and a tall lank white man with a long sun-blistered nose and a hard lipless mouth stood framed in the doorway.

"LeClerc!" he bellowed in English. "Go through that fellow's bags according to regerlations! Tell him to come in here and sign a declaration in my office!"

The black inspector's manner changed.

"Yes, yes, Mr. Clay!" Then he approached Poggioli. "I'll have to request you, m'sieu—"

"Mr. Clay," called Vauquière explanatory, "this is Dr. Poggioli, a house guest of Governor Boisrond."

"Don't make a bit o' difference to me if he is house guest to ——!" barked Mr. Clay, apparently at the end of his patience. "He's got to go through customs right!" And he turned back into his office.

In the meantime Poggioli was out of the stanhope, hurrying in to make his declaration. As he entered he saw a number of other passengers with their valises open on a long counter. Two or three black inspectors were poking among the bags. Mr. Clay stood behind the counter waiting for Poggioli with a scowl on his long sun-bitten face.

"These —— niggers don't know what regerlations mean," he growled, presumably to the psychologist as he opened his bag.

Mr. Clay glanced inside, saw the usual traveler's assortment and continued his monolog:

"Run a guv'ment! Good ——, better be pullin' the bell cord over a mule's back in the cotton rows!" He turned over shirts, pajamas and toilet articles and kept up a running disparagement of the population of Haiti. "Got to keep 'em in their places. Ridiculous, the airs they give theirselves. Governor Boisrond, Dr. Vauquiere, M'sieu Armand—make a man sick!"

After a while he returned Poggioli's bag disapprovingly and said—

"Of course you know your own business, mister, but are you going to be a house guest of this Governor Boisrond?"

"I am," nodded the psychologist, studying the lank, hard-faced man.

"Come from the States, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Yankee, ain't you?"

"Yes."

"Thought so. Well, by——, you Yankees coming down here in Haiti mixing an' mingling with these coons makes it mighty hard on us folks who's down here trying to put the fear of God in their hearts."

Mr. Clay looked strained, as if he really did find this an exhausting task.

"The fear of God," repeated Poggioli curiously.

"Yes," irritably, "trying to keep 'em in their places!"

"What place is that?" asked Poggioli, beginning to be amused.

The chief customs officer stared at him.

"——, you don't believe a nigger is the equal of a white man, do you?"

Poggioli gave this a moment's thought and then inquired—

"Do you believe the leopard is the equal of a polar bear, or the dodo the equal of the wallaby, Mr. Clay?"

Mr. Clay snorted in irritation.

"That shows you're a Yankee all right—answerin' one question by askin' another'n. I'll say good-day and be ——ed to you."

Evidently the sun had peeled something besides Mr. Clay's nose.

Poggioli took his traveling bag and returned through the heat to the stanhope where Dr. Vauquière sat waiting patiently. The yellow man seemed not so much to endure the downpour of sunshine as somehow to avoid it. His shirt and collar were not wilted; he was not even perspiring.

"Sorry I annoyed you with that little scene," he apologized equably in French.

"Who is this man Clay?" asked Poggioli, still amused at the conversation he had had.

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"The American collector of customs here in Cap Haitien."

"I thought the Americans had withdrawn?"

"Their troops, not their custom officials," explained Vauquière dryly. "This Mr. Clay comes from Georgia which, I understand from him, is the richest, most progressive, most aristocratic commonwealth in America. Clay got his appointment through some political service for a Georgia congressman, and was sent down here because he was supposed to be very good at keeping our republic in its place." Vauquière looked at the psychologist with a certain droll expression on his face; then touched his horses and clattered away toward the central *place* of Cap Haitien.

THE streets of Cap Haitien swarmed with black and brown pedestrians who made way for the stanhope with startled cries. In this somnolent coast town of Haiti vehicles seldom moved faster than the lumbering two-wheeled carts drawn by zebus. The whole population walked in the center of the street, the women and girls balancing on their heads packages wrapped in palm leafs or held in tin containers. These shining tin cans, borne on the heads of women, dotted the crowd in every direction. Dr. Vauquière finally mentioned them, saying they were shipped to Haiti by the oil companies, filled with kerosene or lubricating oils.

"Our lower classes buy them for a pittance," he went on, "and use them for every purpose, from cooking utensils and drinking cups to wash pots and hamper baskets. They have almost displaced the old calabashes and woven reed baskets our people used to make."

There was a note of regret in Vauquière's voice as he mentioned this change. The stanhope entered the *place* or central plaza of the town. Here in the noonday heat loitered literally thousands of black marketeers — gossiping, laughing, chaffering over tiny piles of bananas, nuts, guavas; for the women venders sold their wares not by weight or measure but by piles which were large or small as their fancy dictated.

"These tin cans," continued Dr. Vauquière, "have robbed the *place* of half its picturesqueness. The lines of a calabash made a graceful curve on the poised heads of our women, and the red and yellow patterning of the baskets was a pleasure to the eye."

Poggioli nodded.

"That would help. These cans give the market a back alley effect, and," he added in a reflective strain, "it might have a direct influence on the art development of the people. For example, would the Grecian world ever have developed Phidias if the Greek women had carried water from the public cisterns in Standard Oil containers?"

Vauquière looked at Poggioli intently.

"You are jesting?" he queried gravely.

"M—yes, but what I have said probably has some truth in it."

"Quite enough," agreed Vauquière with a certain bitter tinge in his tones, "but I daresay you're the first white man who ever hit upon that point of view."

"It just occurred to me, the oil tins—"

"Precisely. And these oil containers typify in a small way what is happening to our people in a large way all over the island, Mr. Poggioli."

"What's that?" asked the scientist curiously.

"Our native racial development here in Haiti is just on the verge of being completely wiped out and replaced by routine American civilization. That civilization, m'sieu, is like these tin cans—handy, efficient and delivered at our doors."

'And cost little," added the scientist.

"No, these tins are very expensive, m'sieu. They have cost us our folk art in basketry and pottery. That's a strange and a tragic thing, m'sieur, a whole art motif of a people destroyed by tin cans."

"It is an unhappy result," admitted the psychologist, as the horses were forced down to a walk through the market place.

"The whole world loses by it, m'sieu. Only the folk who originate a motif in art can develop it in all its implications. Today modern sculptors go to the old African carving for new *point d'appui*, but what they evolve is not what Africa would have evolved. That is utterly lost."

There was a certain intensity about the yellow man's conversation that was almost novel to Poggioli.

"That is probably true," he admitted. "But it's all in the laps of the gods. Individuals can do nothing in the major trend of racial developments."

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"That is where I disagree," said Dr. Vauquière with greater briskness. "In fact, it is precisely why you are here in Haiti today."

"I!" cried Poggioli, suspecting a jest.

Vauquière nodded.

"Just at this moment, m'sieu, we Haitians have a chance to pick up our lives and go on with them. The American marines have been withdrawn. We have our own officials and constabulary. If our negro civilization is ever to stand erect, m'sieu, now is the hour."

Vauquière enunciated this with the earnestness of a zealot.

"But how can I forward such ends?" asked the scientist.

"By educating our people, m'sieu Poggioli. The marines took over our government because of our lawlessness. Our hills were full of insurrectionary bands called *cacos*. The marines dispersed them, but now since they have been withdrawn, the *cacos* have broken out again in the mountains."

The white man nodded attentively.

"But mark this, these insurrectionary leaders base their authority on the superstition of the negroes. They are workers of magic, voodoo doctors."

"Yes—"

"Now, that is where you come in. We want you to demonstrate to these ordinary Haitian negroes, these black folk here—" Vauquière waved a hand out into the crowded market place—"that voodooism is baseless, that their *caco* leaders are quacks and that they would best cling to the organized government, and not follow every Papa Loi who takes to the brush."

Poggioli looked at the swarm of black folk around the stanhope.

"I can't imagine one man having much effect on such an old folk belief as voodooism."

"The problem is not so wide as that. It is individual. The name of the *caco* leader is Jean LaFronde. If you could explain the rather sinister effects he produces, that would break his hold on his followers and ease our native government over this crisis."

"Has he really created a governmental crisis?"

"Yes, he is trying to make himself such a nuisance that the authorities at Port au Prince will have to recognize him and give him a governmental berth. That is the beaten path to political preferment in this island, m'sieu—insurrection."

THERE was something grotesque in the idea of a Haitian negro's reaching a civil service post because he qualified as a voodoo practitioner. Also that he, Henry Poggioli, had been summoned to Haiti for no better purpose than to expose this black charlatan's tricks. For this purpose Governor Boisrond had cabled for "a corresponding member of the American Society for Psychical Research." Poggioli hardly knew whether to be amused or offended, whether to withdraw, or to go on into the details of this extraordinary commission.

Dr. Vauquière was watching the white man's face.

"M'sieu," he said, "I attempted to enlist your sympathies for my people. I had hoped that a great scientist like you would not be merely amused at this danger which threatens my people. It is usual to smile, m'sieu, but unusual to help."

There was a gentleness to the rebuke that touched Poggioli. He stopped his faint smiling and half apologized by saying there was an incongruousness about the situation, then brought his thoughts back to the actual problem in hand. He visualized a black miracle worker being held somewhere in custody until he, Poggioli, a fellow of the American Society for Psychological Research could get to him and explain his mystifications.

However, he maintained a sober face. He wondered what phase of savage occultism the *caco* leader would affect—fire-walking, sword-swallowing, apoplectic spasms, prophesying. The difficulty was, Poggioli himself did not completely understand these abnormalities. He did not quite see how he could make it clear and simple to the rabble of negroes in the *place*.

"Are we going straight to the prison, Dr. Vauquière?" he inquired out of these thoughts.

The physician looked around in surprize.

"Did you want to examine his victims, m'sieu?"

"His victims? Whose victims?

"Jean LaFronde's. You sounded as if you knew that he cuts off the ears of men sent to him and sends them back mutilated as an advertisement of his power."

Poggioli stared at his companion.

"Why no, I didn't know that!"

"You spoke of wanting to see the prisoners."

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"I thought you had LaFronde himself in prison."

"If we had him in prison, m'sieu, we wouldn't need a psychologist to help break his power."

"How do you hope for me to see him and analyze what he does?" cried the psychologist.

"You may be able to arrange a visit to his camp in the mountains. You would go there, of course, in the rôle of a purely scientific investigator. I am sure LaFronde has heard of your tour through the West Indies. I fancy he would feel flattered to have you visit him."

"M—. But didn't you say that the men you have sent—ah—"

Poggioli broke off not caring quite to express the uncertainty in his thoughts.

Vauquière interpreted and answered them.

"Oh, they were black fellows," he answered lightly, "sent out as the commonest sort of spies. LaFronde cut off their ears and sent them back. Naturally he would not treat a scientific man with such discourtesy. Besides that, you are an American. LaFronde wouldn't want the marines back any more than we do."

Mr. Poggioli's amusement had vanished completely by now, and he sat frowning thoughtfully over this phase of his undertaking.

"By the way," he asked suddenly, "did you say these returned spies were in prison?"

The physician replied in the affirmative.

"But aren't they Governor Boisrond's own men returned to him? Why is he keeping them in prison?"

"Well," hesitated Vauquière, "that's the Governor's idea. Public policy, I believe. But he will probably explain that to you himself. That is his mansion up there."

By this time the stanhope had threaded the crowded *place* and was approaching a long, stone fence which delimited a jungle-grown hillside from the hot flat marketplace. This hill rose sheerly behind its stone barricade, clad with lush shades of green of the jungle trees, and on the crown of the height, through the openings in the foliage, an observer in the *place* below could catch glimpses of a column, the turn of a cornice, a window or a stretch of the eaves, all of which hinted at a mansion of great magnificence on the summit.

Vauquière drove up to a great double gate, guarded by two negroes in the faded uniforms of American marines. These black men with rifles stood at attention as the stanhope approached, and saluted the occupants with a sharp military gesture as the vehicle whisked inside.

A shell road wound up this acclivity through the jungle, and the moment Poggioli passed out of the sunlight into the greenish gloom, he felt as if painful little weights had been lifted from the back of his eyeballs. An earthy hothouse smell surrounded him, composed of the fragrances of flowers and the decaying odors of rank vegetation. The road itself ascended by easy turns and finally brought the stanhope to a terrace on the height where stood the mansion itself. A deep piazza surrounded the building on all four sides, and on the western sweep of the piazza sat three or four persons of color grouped around a great massive black man.

As Dr. Vauquière got out a servant in livery hurried out of some door beneath the piazza and took the horses. Poggioli followed his host up a wide flight of stone steps to be presented to the governor of Cap Haitien.

After the rather heavy magnificence of these surroundings, the psychologist was quite taken aback at the governor himself. Boisrond was a massive black man with the heavy, rolling, almost alarming features one sometimes sees in thoroughly negroid faces. Where Dr. Vauquière was trimly and gracefully vulpine, not to use the word in its bad sense at all, Boisrond was ursine. He was dressed in a great black broadcloth suit which he wore loutishly. When he acknowledged his introduction to Poggioli, he did not use the meticulous French of Vauquière, but spoke a slovenly articulated Gallic, dropping a word now and then of the corrupt creole used by the black plantation laborers on the island.

After recovering somewhat from his surprize at such a governor, and an accompanying vague wonder as to how he had ever attained his seat, Poggioli turned his attention to the other persons on the veranda. One was the wife of Dr. Vauquière, a very pretty woman, an octoroon or thereabouts. There was a tall well tailored chocolate-colored youth called Armand. Another woman was a Mrs. Napoleon LeClerc, a rather full-bodied, deep, yellow woman with fine eyes. At a little distance from this group

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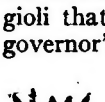
in a spot of sunlight on the piazza lay a disreputable old hound intent, apparently, on baking its brains in the heat while it watched the massive governor with sleepy faithful eyes.

There was still another person who might or might not have belonged to the party on the porch. Now and then she came out on the piazza for a few moments at a time, a fat old black woman hopelessly gowned in purple silk. She would come out, touch one of the potted plants or slightly move one of the empty chairs, then pass into the house again, only to reappear a few minutes later through some door or French window, repeat her trivial adjustments and vanish again. The manner in which Mrs. Vauquière and Mrs. LeClerc followed these in-and-out movements and once in a while smiled at the old creature suggested to Poggioli that this was Madame Boisrond, the governor's wife.



MADAME Vauquière was the only discursive and lively person in the group. She began a feminine chatter as soon as she was introduced to Poggioli. She trusted that their beautiful Haiti had made a good impression on the psychologist. She said she never looked at the mountains out of her bedroom window of a morning but what she recalled her husband's remark in Paris. At that time she was on the stage acting opposite her husband, and Dr. Vauquière had said to her—

"Madelaine, we are going to Haiti."

"Why, Pierre?"

"Because the theater is too prosaic for me. My temperament requires a more theatrical *milieu*."

Here Mrs. Vauquière laughed deliciously at her husband's ancient *mot* and Armand laughed with her, the soft oily laugh of his race.

Vauquière spoke up justifying his remark:

"The scenery here does give one a drop-curtain effect, M'sieu Poggioli. It really is rather more dramatic than a theater. Just step here and look."

He moved quickly to a certain position on the piazza and pointed toward some blue peaks visible in the south east.

"Do you see that wide reddish scar on the crest of that central mountain, m'sieu? That is the most extraordinary piece of architecture on the western hemisphere. It is—" he paused and dropped his voice dramatically—"it is LaFerrière."

Poggioli looked at the distant red blur. As a matter of fact, he had never heard of LaFerrière. He was meditating whether he should ask a question and reveal his ignorance when Governor Boisrond broke into the conversation with an ill-bred brusequeness.

"We'd better stop staring at LaFerrière and tell M'sieu Poggioli what we want him for. No doubt he is in a hurry. Most *des blancs* are."

The small talk fell into an awkward silence; then the physician said smoothly—

"I was just about to suggest it."

He glanced about the group and added in that faint intonation which dismisses unnecessary persons from a business conference—

"Perhaps we would have a pleasanter breeze at the other end of the piazza, Governor?"

At this the women arose hastily, declaring they must get their embroidery and magazines. Vauquière begged them with polite insincerity not to disturb themselves, but the governor simply frowned at them in a forbidding silence until the porch was cleared. Then he turned to Poggioli and reduced his voice to a husky rumble:

"M'sieu, you see in me a man tied up in spider-webs. I can't get at this Jean LaFronde. *Parbleu*, if I could only reach him with a handful of men, I'd—" He clenched a huge black fist in the thin air.

The psychologist nodded sympathetically.

"But I catch no more than that." He opened his empty light-colored palm. "Move against him where I will and when I will, he reads my mind and is not there. It is chasing a jack-o'-lantern, m'sieu. He reads my mind. He knows where I will strike before I touch my sword. It is impossible to hew him down!"

The governor flung down his rough hands hopelessly.

The psychologist nodded again—

"I see. A clever tactician."

And he wondered where a psychologist would enter a purely military problem.

Vauquière sensed his slight disconnection.

"What Governor Boisrond means, m'sieu, is that this Jean LaFronde actually reads his mind, that he is in telepathic communication with him."

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Poggioli stared at the executive.

"You don't mean he reads your thoughts?"

"Certainly I mean it," rumbled the black man in an undertone. "If he could not read my mind, I would catch him at once with my rurales and shoot him on sight." The rolling face contracted in a frown. "I know the mountains as well as Jean LaFronde does. I can fling a squad of men through the brush as fast as he can. I was a *caco* myself once, M'sieu Poggioli, before I forced M. le Prèsidente to recognize me and appoint me governor of this department."

At this casual admission Poggioli suddenly understood this big, crude bear of a negro who had pawed his way up from the meanest social depths to his present station.

Vauquière glossed over this somewhat awkward admission by saying—

"Those were the days before the American occupation, M'sieu Poggioli, when the purest patriots of our island were forced to take to the brush to put down tyranny."

"That's right," nodded Boisrond grimly. "And if I don't keep this *cacos*, Jean LaFronde, down he'll get my post."

"Why do you believe he can literally read your mind?" asked Poggioli curiously.

"*Parbleu*, m'sieu. He does it. I can't catch him. When I send spies to his camp, he reads their minds at once, cuts off their ears and sends them back to my *rurales* as warnings."

"I would not conclude from that that he has telepathic powers."

"Undoubtedly he is a voodoo, m'sieu."

"It is more likely that he has spies in your camp who keep him informed as to who will visit him."

The old dicatator frowned.

"I am not a baby, m'sieu. Naturally I had thought of that. So I have secretly selected a trusted soldier and sent him to Jean LaFronde's camp as a deserter. No living soul knew of it except me and the soldier. Within a day back he would come to me with his ears off. And he would walk about the barracks, talking, talking, saying, 'Jean La Fronde is indeed a Papa Loi. He reads the heart. No living man can deceive Jean LaFronde. There's never been a bullet moulded that can touch his skin!' "

Here the old *caco* drummed on his broadcloth knee.

"*Diable!* All my men believe it! There stands the fool with his ears off to prove it, and my own *rurales* go off by droves to join this Jean LaFronde against me!"

"I see," said Poggioli with more interest. "And these deserters from your army who go to him—does he cut their ears off, too, and send them back?"

"No, no, m'sieu!" bellowed the massive negro with a bob of his woolly head. "If the man is really a deserter, Jean LaFronde reads his heart like an open book and puts him in the *caco* ranks, but if he is a spy, *snip!* Off go his ears, and back he comes to me!"

"But why does he send them back?"

HERE Armand interposed to say tensely:

"Because, m'sieu, it is the most successful method of advertising himself you can conceive of. Our rurales desert to him in shoals. The plantation negroes hear of it and hurry to his camp. Every new mutilation creates a furor."

"Where are some of these mutilated men?" queried the psychologist.

"They are all in LaFerrière now," rumbled the governor in an annoyed growl. "When they come back, I have to put them in LaFerrière."

"Is that a prison?" asked Poggioli taken aback at the grimness of the situation.

"It's—LaFerrière," hesitated Armand. "Of course it was not built for a prison, still—" He paused significantly.

"You see," interpolated Vauquière smoothly, "there was nothing to do except place these mutilated men in confinement. They would talk. A wonder had happened to them. They went about with a continual unconscious proselyting."

"My heavens!" cried Poggioli. "What a profound injustice! The very soldiers who were faithful and loyal, who suffered mutilation in your service, then to be cast into prison for their fidelity!"

"M'sieu," rumbled the governor dryly, "the reason I cabled for you was not to exclaim over half a dozen odd *rurales* in prison, but to keep the others out."

After a little pause Poggioli asked—

"Well, what do you want me to do about it?"

"*Diable*, m'sieu, I want you to give me and my men a *wanga*, charm, against this fellow. He has a strong *wanga* against us. Now you are a great Papa Loi, make a stronger charm than this Jean LaFronde

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possesses, so we can read his mind and he cannot read ours, then I'll catch him and—burn him like a dried stalk!"

Poggioli arose.

"You are ridiculous, Governor Boisrond," he said sharply. "I'm not a voodoo doctor, going around making amulets, I—"

Vauquière held up a placating hand just as Boisrond was about to belch out some furious retort.

"Wait, wait, m'sieu, just a word—"

"But this governor," Poggioli said the word with disgust, "seems to consider me a voodoo doctor."

"May I explain?"

"There is nothing to explain, if he imagines—"

"Won't you allow me, m'sieu, to show you that Governor Boisrond is paralleling in his world of thought, as best he can, the universe as you know it?"

A certain scholarly tang to this sentence caused the collegian to subside somewhat.

"Go ahead. I'm willing to hear what you can say."

"Then let me suggest, M'sieu Poggioli, that when an unschooled man speaks of voodooism or witchcraft, he means exactly what the psychologist means when he speaks of psychic phenomena. Both men are talking of the same thing. Everybody knows strange effects can be produced. A savage wants relief and he asks for a charm. An American wants relief and he asks to be psychoanalyzed. You two gentlemen have grown angry over your terminology, which is the basis of nine-tenths of the philosophical and religious disputes in this world. All Governor Boisrond is asking you to do is to prevent Jean LaFronde from getting any further knowledge of his intentions."

Poggioli was forced to agree to this analysis. He regretted his curtness of speech. He said he supposed it was an outcrop of his mental attitude as a college professor which ran to much dignity and little patience.

Dr. Vauquière was smiling over this *amende honorable* when Boisrond interrupted to ask bluntly—

"But what are you going to do about this *caco*?"

"First," said Poggioli good temperedly, "I would like to see these mutilated men and have a talk with them. I want to analyze their statements and mental attitudes."

The ponderous executive got himself out of his chair.

"They're in LaFerrière. Let's go and see them now."

There was a directness about the big black man's actions which somehow reinstated him in Poggioli's esteem. If his vocabulary was rambling and somewhat insulting, his movements at least were pointed with the logic of the occasion. He was evidently about to set out at once for LaFerrière. It occurred to Poggioli that it was now high noon—the sunshine was like a Russian bath—also that he had not had his lunch. By way of indicating his feeling, he looked at the distant scar on the peak and asked suggestively—

"How far is it to LaFerrière, Governor Boisrond?"

"Twenty-two miles," rumbled the governor.

"How are we going to get there?" asked Poggioli, a little dismayed.

"In carriages. It will requires about two hours."

Poggioli drew out his watch and looked at it significantly.

"Perhaps we'd better have lunch here and start a little later," suggested Dr. Vauquière.

"Are you hungry, M'sieu Poggioli?" asked the black man in a manner that suggested that he ate when he was hungry, regardless of the hours.

"I must confess I have an appetite."

"That's easy enough." He turned toward the hallway and boomed impatiently—

"Gateau! Gateau! What's keeping you, Gateau!"

Just as Boisrond was drawing in his breath for a really thunderous bellow, the fat old black woman in purple silk appeared in the doorway.

"Gateau," said the Governor, "have the servants make a meal at once."

"*Oui, oui*," bobbed the old crone in even more deplorable creole than her husband used.

"And, Gateau," ordered the Governor roundly, "have it served in LaFerrière!" He made a gesture toward the distant mountain to make perfectly clear what he meant, then rumbled—

"Now, let's be off!"

There was a stir among the men as they made ready to go. Armand rushed into the house after his sun helmet and linen ulster, without which, apparently, he could not travel. When he came striding out on the

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porch with these articles, the governor growled briefly at him.

"You go on down the road to the gate with Vauquière. I'll walk down the path with M'sieu Poggioli."

Vauquière bowed his agreeableness, and he and Armand started out, the short and tall figures of two carefully dressed negroes passing through the sunlight around the curve of the shell road, and so out of sight.

Governor Boisrond watched them go, then set off at a shambling gait with Poggioli about a half step behind him. Twice the American made a little skip step to be even with his host, but he was at once dropped a little to the rear again by the ungainly black man. After a little distance, Boisrond deserted the road for a path that wound down the hill through the jungle. Here there was not width for walking abreast, and the psychologist followed on the giant's long noiseless steps. Presently the governor asked over his shoulder in a low rumble—

"What do you think of this Jean LaFronde?"

"I'll have to gather more data to draw a conclusion, Governor Boisrond."

Another silence as the executive lowered and twisted himself about to avoid limbs and vines.

"Do you think Jean LaFronde pays my spies to have their ears cut off?" he queried out of a clear sky.

Such an abrupt *volte face* from his former superstitious remarks about the *caco* leader surprized Poggioli.

"It is improbable that every one of your men would yield in the same way. Human nature usually has more variety than that."

"Then you think he really is a Papa Loi and can read men's minds?"

"I'll have to obtain more data."

THE two moved on for some distance in silence. Presently the black man halted under a banyan, lifted his arms and caught hold high up on two tertiary trunks. His broad-cloth coat and white collar were twisted askew by the muscles in his massive shoulders and long powerful arms. Indeed he looked like nothing so much as some somber and grotesquely attired gorilla. He stood supporting the greater part of his weight on his arms and perusing the American with his deep-set eyes. Evidently he was about to catechise the scientist. He stood so a few seconds and then asked in a muted rumble—

"What do you think of Mr. Clay?"

The question was so far away from the range of Poggioli's thoughts that he simply stood staring in the green twilight and repeated inanely—

"Mr. Clay?"

Boisrond nodded.

"The customs collector," he explained guardedly.

"Why—I saw him— He was impolite, dogmatic, rather extreme in his racial prejudices. Why do you ask me about Mr. Clay?"

"What do you think of Armand?"

"He is the usual adjunct to a wealthy man's household. Nobody knows what they do, but they seem to prosper in their profession, whatever it is."

Boisrond's bossed face and great lips formed into a moulding of mirth.

"That is Armand. I like to see him about. Once I almost gave him a hundred *gourdes* but somehow I didn't. He seems to have money. I don't know how he gets it. That's a point you should remember."

Poggioli began to see that this conversation was partially for his own instruction. He nodded and said nothing.

"Dr. Vauquière?"

"I think he is the smoothest courtier I ever saw," said the white man.

"He was an actor once in Paris."

"So I gathered."

"It was his profession," ruminated the giant, "to appear to feel what he did not. That is a point you should not overlook."

Poggioli began to study the dusky ogre with a perception of some unfathomed subtlety behind his sloping skull.

"What do you think of Madame LeClerc?"

"I barely saw her before she went into the house."

"She is the wife of Napoleon LeClerc, an assistant inspector of customs under Mr. Clay."

The American smiled understandingly.

"I see you don't put complete faith in the theory that Jean LaFronde's information was acquired solely by mind reading?"

"When a man sends for a doctor, m'sieu, he tells him his aches and gripes."

"I hope," said Poggioli, "that your suspicions do not include me, Governor Boisrond."

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"M'sieu, you flared up at me a moment ago for asking you a silly thing. You are the first man except one who has been openly angry at me since the day I ordered former Governor Milleteau shot."

Poggioli nodded.

"And this other man who was openly angry with you, who was he?"

"Mr. Clay. The first time I went into his office he looked at me, leaped up, cursed and almost frothed at the mouth. I could not understand English. Armand was with me. 'Armand' I asked, 'What is he saying?' 'He is requesting you to take off your hat,' said Armand."

At such an episode Poggioli burst into loud surprized laughter, but at that very moment was startled into silence by a faint rustling among the leaves just outside their covert. This slight noise caught at the psychologist's nerves with a painful start. The governor's whisperings and vague blanket suspicions of everybody had keyed the scientist up, unknown to himself. A moment later, however, their common suspense was relieved by the governor's hound nosing into the little space where the two men stood.

The dog apparently plunged the black man into deep thought. He stood for several moments studying the animal, then broke off to say briskly—

"Well, on to LaFerrière to see what Jean LaFronde does to the prisoners!"

He swung himself about with his arms and the next moment was striding down the difficult path with such swiftness that several times Poggioli was forced to ask him to slacken his pace.

AT THE gate of the Governor's grounds, the men arranged themselves in a waiting carriage with that instinctive selection which places congenial persons together. Poggioli and Dr. Vauquière occupied the rear seat; Armand and Governor Boisrond, the front. Armand drove a pair of gray English coach horses at a round pace over the hard-surfaced road.

As soon as the party was clear of the squalid reaches of Cap Haitien, the queer three-ply civilization of the country set in. At intervals along the road, mouldered ruins of that old French life which, during the Napoleonic era, had made Haiti one of the richest of France's possessions and Cap Haitien the "Paris of the American hemisphere."

Out in the sugar fields lay the outlines of these vanished manors, and besides them, often upon their crumbled foundations, stood the miserable *yagua* huts of the negroes who had overthrown that opulent French world. In final contrast to these survivals was the beautiful hard-finished road which the Americans had built and which they now, in turn, deserted to the black population.

It was a queer ensemble of history, of colliding human desires and ambitions, and as the psychologist drove through the sun-baked acres, it filled his thoughts with a certain dim questioning which seemed, somehow, to involve this very rôle which he personally was just beginning to play.

In the midst of this silent catechism which his surroundings propounded, Armand swung aside his grays to allow the passage of a rather dilapidated American automobile which came clacking down the road. Poggioli came out of his musing to see the long angular form of Mr. Clay at the wheel, and by his side sat the Jewish insurance agent, Mr. Osterwasski.

Poggioli recognized his fellow passenger with that odd sense of pleasure a man feels in meeting on land a person he has known on shipboard. The psychologist brightened up, waved a gay hand at Osterwasski, and went so far as to nod affably at Clay. The two men however merely glanced at the carriage with the briefest of nods and rattled on down the road.

The psychologist was surprized at this slight, especially from Osterwasski, who had seemed one of those punctilious coldly agreeable men who would carefully avoid making either an enemy or a friend.

Vauquière smiled dryly and explained their grievance.

"The *cacos* have raided the Minot plantation a little farther on, and the owner is wanting a settlement with the insurance company for his losses. These men have been out to take testimony in the case, and Gravelotte Minot, that is the man the *cacos* robbed, was not at home."

Poggioli stared at his companion.

"Why should he cut me!"

Vauquière spread his hands.

"A general social *malaise*, m'sieu. They are soured on the world."

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"But the cause of their offense is absurd—a man not being at home!"

"*Ça*, to tell you the truth, m'sieu, this Gravelotte Minot will not be at home and they know it. He has doubtless followed off the *cacos* and joined them. They will not get his testimony and certainly will have to pay the insurance."

The scientist was still more amazed.

"You don't mean he joined the *cacos* after they robbed him!"

The governor turned in his seat and bent his big gargoyle face on his guest.

"That is exactly what they do, m'sieu. Every negro who is robbed immediately joins the *cacos*. How to stop that is part of your problem. It is the work of the devil!"

A little later the carriage passed the Minot estate, as the West Indians call their farms. The Minot hut stood at some distance from the road in a field of ill-tended sugar cane. The travelers could just see the thatched roof of the hut above the waving green cane, and still higher than this, stuck up on a pole as a guard against the spells of the voodoo, hung the long white skull of a horse.

Under the palms at the edge of the boulevard stood a ragged negro woman where, no doubt, she had been summoned by the white men for interrogation. She had not gone back to her hut, but had remained under the shade of the palms with the listlessness of her kind.

"Do she and her husband own this plantation?" queried Poggioli curiously.

"*Sacre bleu*, man, no," rumbled the governor. "It's my plantation! They're my tenants! The shiftless idlers! Ho, Isabel!" shouted the giant as he went past. "Go back and get to work! Do something!"

The woman turned with sullen unwilling movements and slowly retreated with her rags and pig-tails bobbing in protest. And indeed what profitable task Isabel could do when she reached her hut, Poggioli could not imagine.

As the carriage bowled on, remnants of an old stone fence lay beneath the organ cactus which now served the purpose of a hedge for the governor's estate. The stone ruin implied again the thriftiness of the murdered French colony. This and the organ cactus hard beside the wide American road suggested once more to the scientist the same vague problem on which the discourtesy of Clay and Osterwasski appeared to hang.

He rode ahead, somewhat disturbed and quite unable to clarify this vague feeling of being somehow implicated in this incongruous blending of past and present, when Dr. Vauquière said:

"You must not judge our race's ability by this poor scum, M'sieu Poggioli. That would be as unfair as estimating one of your American cities by its slums. Look up yonder on the mountain top. You will have to admit that into the text of this scenery, *mon ami*, before you can get at the truth of this situation."

THE psychologist was surprized at how closely the yellow man had shot at his reverie. He followed Dr. Vauquière's gesture and saw that the red gash which he had seen from the governor's piazza had now expanded into a vast reddish precipice.

Poggioli was still unaware of what LaFerrière might be, and now he stared at this prodigious cliff in the mountain's massif, quite at sea as to what possible connection this salient feature of a gigantic landscape could have on the perplexity in his heart. He continued staring at its enormous surface, still so distant that the swift trot of the horses had no perceptible effect in adding to its details. However, there was something about it which suggested that it might be something else than merely a prodigious mountain face. Finally his growing curiosity made him ask—

"Dr. Vauquière, what is LaFerrière?"

At the question, the governor and the two colored men turned and looked at their guest in the blankest astonishment. After a pause Vauquière said with a certain droll expression—

"Don't you see, m'sieu, it is a precipice rather higher, I should say, than your Woolworth building."

"That's what it seems," admitted Poggioli doubtfully.

At this Armand broke into his courteous, oiled laughter.

"Certainly, that's just what it seems, and no doubt is what it is. Everything in Haiti, M'sieu Poggioli, is exactly what it seems. That's a characteristic of our country."

Governor Boisrond burst into rough laughter at Armand's friendly satire, but after a moment became somber enough once more.

The white man gazed at the monstrous

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expanse, and by this time the carriage had gained on it sufficiently to show the lines and gloomy modeling of a cyclopean masonry.

The effect of seeing the mountain resolve itself into some sort of enormous castle or citadel was one of the most amazing experiences Poggioli had ever known. Considered as a mountain it dominated the landscape, but as a work of man it dwindled all the hot wide-flung view to a scene in Lilliput.

The governor's party behind the big English coach horses were reduced to the folk out of a fairy story, whisking along in a walnut shell behind a team of mice. The very jungle trees at the foot of this vast architecture were shrunk to a green moss. As the carriage went still nearer, La Ferrière's bulk obscured the southern sky, and even then its distance was stingy of detail. Innumerable eyelets became visible in the lower part of its upward sweep. Vauquière pointed them out.

"Those dots, m'sieu—you can make out some of the lowest ones—are the embrasures of cannon."

Poggioli looked his stupefaction.

"That is why I asked you to reserve your opinion. All that was thought out and built by the same people who live today in these little *yagua* huts, M'sieu Poggioli—the Haitian negroes."

Poggioli stared in silence as the carriage began winding upward toward the hugest piece of masonry on the Western hemisphere.

A little further on the governor's party was forced to leave the carriage and mount a narrow, rugged path on foot. By the time they had ascended to the heights of the fortification all were blown and lagging except possibly the executive himself who still walked with the same shambling strength which he had exhibited at the beginning of the climb.

Once on the heights, Poggioli's heart was quickened by the far horizon of a mountain view. Almost under his feet lay Cap Haitien beside a bay of transparent blue. Far to the south along the gleaming sinuosities of the coast line he could make out a blur which was Port au Prince. To the west arose the blue peaks of Santo Domingo.

This royal eyrie was hewn along lines as vast as its purview. Poggioli might have been standing in the midst of a fortified plain. Rows of huge ancient cannon, each with its pyramid of rusty cannon balls beside it, extended in a long curve around the parapet until they diminished in perspective to children's toys. The walls through which these ancient dogs once bayed were twenty-five feet thick and were built of solid hewn stones. How such monoliths were elevated to this dizzy height stunned the imagination. The panorama and the cyclopean work seemed to excite Dr. Vauquière.

"This was built by Henri Christophe, a slave who made himself an emperor! Think of it! What a gesture!"

Poggioli approached the vertiginous brink. The thought of men straining at these enormous stones, truing their edges over empty space dizzied him.

"What a toll of lives this must have taken," he ejaculated.

"Thousands," agreed Vauquière readily, "If we can believe the legends about Christophe, hundreds of men were executed in forcing this labor."

"What an abominable tyranny!"

Vauquière flared up out of his customary suavity.

"A tyranny that leaves a work like this, m'sieu, is not abominable. It at least erects something that will stand against the current of time. A tyranny is admirable because, in the hands of a great autocrat, it can focus the whole force of a people on some great work like La Ferrière or the pyramids. But a democracy, that is, force . . . . scattered among a multitude of insignificant purposes, and accomplishes little or nothing."

"It accomplishes freedom," retorted Poggioli.

"And what is democratic freedom except a vicious system of government by which the natural leaders of mankind are forced to spend three-fourths of their power persuading men to follow them instead of commandeering a people and devoting their whole energy to some magnificent undertaking? The colored races form natural despotisms, m'sieu, and it is significant that the mightiest works in the world have been lifted by dark hands—the Taj, the Alhambra, the Sphinx, the Temples of Elephanta and La Ferrière."

Just as Vauquière reached this rather surprizing conclusion, the two men were interrupted by the rumble of Governor

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Boisrond's voice calling in brusque creole—

"M'sieu Poggioli, if you want to talk to the prisoners, come and talk to them!"

THE American looked around and saw the huge black man apparently sunk to his knees in the stone pavement of the fort. The two men went forward quickly and found the executive on a great stairway that led down into the lower stories of the citadel. This flight of stairs was of the same herculean proportions as the rest of the building.

On descending it, the governor and his party entered a huge chamber with its gloom relieved only by the light which this stairway admitted from above and which a row of embrasures admitted from the side. They descended still another flight of stairs and still another until they had climbed down five stories of this stupendous fortress. The walls of every story were pierced for cannon, and the huge rusting guns still peered out into the abyss. The great fort was exactly as Emperor Christophe had left it more than a century before.

On the dank bottom floor of this fortress Poggioli walked through the alternate lights and shadows admitted through the embrasures, and presently was startled to see a man lying chained to the breech of one of the cannon. At the approach of the party this man got to his feet. At the next cannon beyond another figure arose, and so on with a rattling of their chains until seven negroes stood lined up along the embrasures. They lifted their hands stiffly to their kinky heads in salute to the governor. The smell of closely confined men filled the clammy air.

The ponderous governor waved an ursine paw at the dismal line-up.

"There you are, m'sieu," he said in an echoing tone. "That first man's name is Clocher. Ask him what you like and I'll have him answer."

Then Poggioli saw that Clocher's ears were missing. This repulsive detail was repeated in each one of the seven men. The plight of these unfortunates, whose only offense was their fidelity to the governor and the natural garrulousness of simple men, moved the psychologist to a keen pity. He began questioning Clocher, at the same time wondering how he might set the wretch at liberty. When did he go to Jean LaFronde's camp? Who appointed him as spy? Did any one beside Governor Boisrond know he was going? Did he go alone?

To all these questions Clocher mumbled his answer and nodded his kinky head this way and that after the fashion of illiterate negroes.

It appeared that four other rurales had gone to the *caco* camp with Clocher. These four had been genuine deserters. They had slipped out of Cap Haitien for the *caco* camp at about two o'clock in the morning.

"What time did you arrive?" went on the psychologist.

"It took us till sunup," mumbled Clocher, casting uneasy eyes at the governor.

"How did you find the way?"

Here Vauquière interposed to say that LaFronde had *cacos* posted along the route to direct deserters to his camp.

"He is doing a wholesale business!" ejaculated Poggioli.

"He wants to be governor," growled Boisrond. "Unless you can stop him, m'sieu, I might as well fly from Cap Haitien while I am alive."

The scientist turned to Clocher again.

"What happened to you at the camp?"

"We heard them singing and dancing and the guard went to see if we could come in."

"You were admitted?"

"*Oui*, m'sieu."

"Did you see Jean LaFronde?"

"*Oui*."

"What sort of fellow was he?"

"A tall dark man, m'sieu, with a knife stuck through his arm."

Poggioli hesitated at this unexpected detail.

"A knife through his arm?"

"Through his wrist, m'sieu. He is a Papa Loi."

Poggioli turned to his companions.

"There is a clew to the whole performance, gentlemen. A cheap street fair trick like that."

Clocher repeated earnestly the conviction which had got him chained down in the bowels of LaFerrière.

"It really was through his wrist, m'sieu. I saw it with my own eyes. The point came out three or four inches on the back of his wrist."

The psychologist nodded.

"That's all right Clocher. Then what did he do to you?"

"We walked up to him through a long

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line of dancing *cacos*. The guards took away our knives and rifles. When we came to him, he took a drop of our blood, put it on his tongue and swallowed it. That gave him power over us."

"Why so?" asked Poggioli.

"M'sieu, he was a Papa Loi. He had swallowed a drop of our blood!"

"Yes, yes, then what happened?"

"He said, 'Are you a true *caco* at heart?' and all of us said, '*Oui, oui*, Papa Loi!' He said, 'When these drops of blood reach my heart I will know what is in your heart. If you are not honest *cacos*, go away now and never let me see your faces again.' "

Clocher's eyes widened at this uncanny reminiscence.

"But you didn't go away?"

"No, m'sieu, I was a spy."

"What about the others?"

"They stayed, too. They were true *cacos* at heart."

"But he didn't cut off the ears of these other men?"

"Oh no. When their blood reached his heart he knew they were true *cacos* and he knew that I was a spy."

Here the simplicity of Clocher's belief somehow annoyed Poggioli.

"Clocher," he cried, "don't you know that's all foolishness! When all those drops of blood went down his throat together what makes you think he could tell one from the other?"

Clocher stared at the psychologist clearly surprized at such skepticism; then he turned his head in silence and pointed at his missing ear.

POGGIOLI recovered from his impatience and smiled. It occurred to him that pragmatism had seduced abler minds than Clocher's.

"Let me see," he began again. "La-Fronde said he would know when your drop of blood reached his heart. There was a time element in it. He didn't know immediately that you were a spy."

"No, m'sieu."

"How long did it take him to find that out?"

"When that drop of blood reached—"

"That's all right about the drop of blood. You may forget that. When did he come up to you and say, 'Clocher, you're a spy, I'm going to cut off your ears!' "

"He—he never did say that to me, m'sieu."

"Well, when did he cut off your ears?"

"He—he never did cut off my ears."

"They're gone!"

"*O-Oui*, they're gone. He—jest wished 'em off. He's a Papa Loi."

"Clocher!" snapped Poggioli with a professor's impatience. "Tell me what happened after this blood ceremony!"

"Tell him," rumbled Boisrond, taking a step toward the prisoner.

Clocher began rattling:

"Me and a guard went to a *yagua*, a—a little house. He left me by myself. I sat down. I was in the *yagua*—"

"Well, we know that. You've said it a dozen times!"

"Then my ears fell off, m'sieu, and I went home," finished the negro in evident mystification himself.

"Perhaps a beating would assist his memory!" rumbled Governor Boisrond angrily.

Dr. Vauquière gave a shrug:

"There's no getting any sense out of these negroes."

Poggioli proceeded on another line of attack.

"Your ears came off and you went home at once?"

"*Oui*, m'sieu."

"What time was it when you left the *caco* camp?"

"The sun was straight up."

"About twelve o'clock?"

"*Oui*, m'sieu."

"How did you get away from the camp?"

"A *caco* blindfolded me and led me round and round in the jungle. When he took the cloth off my eyes I was on the road to Cap Haitien."

"Now look here, Clocher," cornered the psychologist, "you reached this camp at sunrise. You left it at noon. Then you must have stayed there for six hours. What did you do in that time?"

"M'sieu, I did not stay six hours! I went away at once!"

"But you were forced to, arriving at dawn and leaving at twelve. Now what did you do?"

Clocher seemed amazed. He scratched his bullet shaped head, leaned over and looked at his feet. He had never before observed that gap in his recollections. Suddenly he had the solution.

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"M'sieu!" he cried in relief, "Jean LaFronde cast a *wanga* on the sun and made it jump from the horizon to the top of the world all in a minute. I saw him do it. Jean LaFronde is a Papa Loi."

The psychologist gave up his attempt with Clocher and turned to the other negroes, but they had taken warning from their comrade. Their testimony coincided precisely with his except they left no gaps of time unexplained. Each one of them had seen Jean LaFronde point at the sun, and had seen the sun leap suddenly to mid-heaven. However, it became clear that each of the earless men had remained in Jean LaFronde's camp four or five hours, although what they did during this interval, Poggioli could not determine.

Governor Boisrond naturally observed this hiatus in their stories, and he motioned Poggioli aside.

"My spies are lying," he said in a heavy undertone. "I think we would best beat them after all."

"No," said Poggioli, "that would do no good. They are genuinely confused."

"But why do they say the sun jumped and their ears came off?"

"They are rationalizing."

"What's that?"

"They don't know what happened, and their minds automatically try to bridge in the gap. What they are striving for is a logic to carry on their thoughts. Logic is supposed to be a test of truth, Governor, but it is the mother of a million falsities. The human mind cannot accept a gap in its reflections, so it invents fillers, and that is the basis of religion and metaphysics."

"I believe a beating would help," persisted the governor.

"For ——'s sake, don't make martyrs out of these men!" cried the psychologist. "Somehow or another torture sets a rationalist firmer in his faith." The scientist stood staring out through an embrasure on to a diminished landscape a thousand feet below him. "Here, I have thought of a way. I believe I can change these poor devils into good patriotic *rurales* whom you can set at liberty and who will automatically become advocates of the regular government."

"How's that?" rumbled the giant skeptically.

"Let's go back to the men a moment."

The two men returned to the fettered negroes and Poggioli braced up his thoughts for a genuine forensic effort. He cleared his throat.

"Men," he began to the seven negroes, "who do you think would make the best governor, a Papa Loi, who could read your hearts or just an ordinary man like one of us?"

The seven stared at Poggioli, and then looked around at each other at this remarkable question. Finally one of the negroes in a low tone answered truthfully—

"M'sieu, a Papa Loi, of course."

"But look here," argued the American, "think how unpleasant it would be to have a governor who could read your hearts. Look at this Jean LaFronde who cut off your ears for telling him one lie. Now suppose you had a governor who knew every sinful thought in your hearts, who instantly detected every theft, every perjury, every drunkenness, every assault. Don't you know that everybody would land in jail or on the gallows? Do you suppose there is a man in Cap Haitien who hasn't done enough at some time in his life to be hanged for? Why gentlemen, a Papa Loi would be the most dangerous governor you could have. What you need and what Cap Haitien needs is just an ordinary man like Governor Boisrond, if you hope to stay out of prison."

The seven chained negroes stared at this remarkable viewpoint of supernatural governors with whitened eyes.

"*Oui, oui*, dat's right, M'sieu!"

"Instead of talking about how Jean LaFronde read your heart, you men should have pointed out what a dangerous governor LaFronde would make."

"*Oui*, that's a fact," agreed Clocher, "he cut off our ears just because we told him one lie."

The third negro down mumbled—

"What would he have done if his wife and daughters had been there?"

Armand suddenly shouted with laughter at this extraordinary twist Poggioli had given to the qualifications for a governor.

The psychologist came back to Boisrond smiling.

"If you could get these fellows to proselyting for you instead of against you. You see their missing ears are just as good an argument for you as for LaFronde. I don't see why you couldn't order the wretches released and let them spread that point of view."

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The men were walking back toward the great staircase again.

"I had never thought of that argument," rumbled the governor. "I hope we can find some way of spreading it over Cap Haitien, but these men—" he nodded back at the prisoners chained to the mouldering cannon—"these men saw Jean LaFronde point at the sun and make it jump."

ON THE drive back from the Brobdignagian fortress the governor growled—

"What do you think of this Jean LaFronde now, m'sieu?"

"A charlatan, no doubt."

"Did he read the prisoners' minds?"

"The negroes mix what they saw and what they imagined so badly. It leaves a man balanced between two or three hypotheses, Governor."

"What are they?" asked the giant, turning in his seat to look back at his guest, while both Vauquière and Armand gave the American closer attention.

"He may have a system of espionage by which he is able to keep pretty close tab on deserters which are spies and which genuine deserters."

Both Armand and the governor nodded.

"Then, he may be an actual mind reader. There are such persons. Thus, in a way, he would qualify as a voodoo doctor, but there would be nothing supernatural about it. However, that point would be difficult to explain to the *hoi polloi* here in the island."

"That's exactly what it would be," laughed Armand.

"Then, that gap in the memories of the prisoners suggests a possibility of the use of drugs of some sort, but I don't quite see how a *caco* in the Haitien brush would get hold of a pharmacopœia."

The three black men considered this.

"As I said before," rumbled the governor, "this LaFronde is a man of education, M'sieu Poggioli. I wouldn't doubt if he had accomplices in Port au Prince itself."

"Well, that's one phase. Then he may be a simple sleight of hand artist, as the knife sticking through his wrist suggests. By scaring the recruits he may be skillful enough reader of character to determine his friends from his enemies."

"That's a good many different sorts of explanations," grumbled Boisrond.

"Certainly, it is like a chemical analysis. One tests everything."

"When you see this Jean LaFronde for yourself," rumbled the governor, "you will be able to explain his tricks and stop his influence."

Poggioli fell silent. He enjoyed the analytical part of the problem, but this notion of going out into the brush to interview an outlaw was something different. Armand began whistling a lively waltz under his breath. There was a certain hint of raillery in his music.

The psychologist was really curious about this *caco* chief and his wonders, real or pretended; on the other hand he had no desire at all to jeopardize his own safety, just as Armand's whistling suggested. Poggioli felt very strongly that the world should be made safe for science. In other words Poggioli had the conservative temperament of the usual brunet type. As the horses bowled along he decided positively that he would not go to the *caco* camp, and began thinking what excuse he could make. He decided he would enter the plea that he did not have time, that he was sailing for Barbados on the *Talleyrand* at the end of the week.

As he decided on this, the grays clattered into the dusty *place* of Cap Haitien amid the usual excitement of negroes getting out of the way. The governor directed Armand to drive by the market, a great open shed filled with stalls and presenting a kaleidoscope of tropical wares; fruits, caged birds, palm fiber hats, and the rainbow fish of the Caribbean. Flies buzzed everywhere. The smell of tropical flowers and decaying vegetables was in the air.

The governor stopped the carriage in front of an old crone who squatted on the pavement beside some piles of arica nuts, potatoes and charcoal, which formed her stock in trade.

"Auntie," called the governor, "when you go back into the mountains send word to Jean LaFronde that M'sieu Poggioli, the great American voodoo inspector, will come and inspect his camp."

The old woman, whose face looked like dark wrinkled crêpe, stared in amazement at this remarkable message. Her mouth dropped open,

"A voodoo inspector, *mon* Governor!"

"Certainly, you know the Americans inspect everything. Tell Jean LaFronde

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to have his men on the lookout and see that he gets safely to his camp."

"Maria in Heaven!" gasped the old negress. "Inspect a Papa Loi! These Americans are utterly mad!"

By this time the conversation had collected quite a gallery. Somebody called out—

"Is m'sieu not afraid?"

"Not of the devil himself, m'sieu," laughed Armand. "These Americans would inspect the grids of hell."

The withered old vender crossed herself.

Poggioli turned to Vauquière—

"Is it possible for the governor to send a message to Jean LaFronde by the first vender he sees?"

The physician made a gesture.

"Cap Haitien is like a spider's web, m'sieu. Touch a thread and it all quivers."

Poggioli said to no one in particular and with an air of sudden remembrance—

"By the way, I won't be able to go on this junket. My ship sails tomorrow."

A negro's voice from the press called—

"What ship, m'sieu?"

"The *Talleyrand*."

Two or three voices called out in unison:

"Do not worry, M'sieu Voodoo Inspector. The *Talleyrand* is three days late. The wharfinger got it over the radio."

Poggioli looked around at the crowd and repeated earnestly—

"I don't want to miss that ship."

While they were at the market-place Armand and Vauquière got out to follow to the executive mansion on foot. As Poggioli drove back with Governor Boisrond, he hatched up more objections to the proposed trip to the *caco* camp.

"By the way, Governor, I can't possibly get to this Jean LaFronde's camp without a guide."

"He will have men posted to watch out for you."

"But he wouldn't allow a psychologist in his camp coming with the avowed purpose of exposing his tricks."

"If he does not, every negro on the island will say at once he is no true Papa Loi. He would not dare refuse you admittance."

The carriage rolled on a bit.

"I don't suppose he would try to cut my ears off to show his power?"

"Ill treat an American? He would be afraid the marines would return and that would end all his plans."

JUST then the psychologist's reluctance struck out a perfectly new objection.

"Look here, Governor," he exclaimed with quite a show of frank willingness to go, "there is no use my making the trip after all. The mystery to be solved is how Jean LaFronde can pick out spies. If I go to the camp alone there will be no new arrival of either spy or deserter for me to observe."

Boisrond nodded.

"I had thought of that, m'sieu. I shall select two men to go with you, a genuine spy and a genuine deserter. You can see what happens to both."

"You have two such men?" asked Poggioli with a dampened feeling.

"I have the spy, m'sieu. A deserter can be picked up along the road."

"Who is he! I hate for another man to have his ears lopped off."

"This man won't," stated the black giant positively. "I think all my other men were frightened by the knife in Jean LaFronde's wrist. The man I will send is afraid of nothing."

"Who is he?" repeated the American curiously.

The governor scrutinized his companion.

"You will give no sign, m'sieu, no hint?"

The scientist spread his hands.

"I will have to know anyway to see if he picked the right man."

"That's true." Came a pause, then the huge black man said simply, "I am going myself, m'sieu."

The white man stared at the negro.

"Not you!"

Boisrond nodded.

"If he gets you in his power don't you know he will kill you!"

"He will not know I am the governor. Merely a clumsy black deserter flying from Governor Boisrond's camp."

"But even if he finds out you are a spy and cuts off your ears, don't you know your prestige would be utterly gone. Not one of your *rurales* would remain with you!"

"No, but if he fails to detect the governor, m'sieu, that will be the end of Jean LaFronde. He wagers as much as I do."

Poggioli was genuinely disturbed, and

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used all the arguments he could summon against such a venture, but he could not budge the huge black man.

It struck Poggioli as he studied the great gargoyle face, that this was the very stuff out of which were woven the epics of any primitive people. From such material were cut the sagas, Beowolf, the Germanic legends, except that this man was black.

As the carriage passed into the grounds of the mansion, the governor rumbled:

"Be ready to go with me at two o'clock in the morning, m'sieu. We will pick up some deserter already on the road."

A little later they drew up at the mansion. Servants came out to take the horses. As they climbed the steps, Boisrond roared for a man to come show M'sieu Poggioli to his rooms.

The two men separated in the extremely high hall of the mansion, and Poggioli followed a servant up to the second story to a suite of chambers which had been set apart for his use. His bags were already in his dressing room, and his sitting room had large windows giving a view of Manzanilla Bay where the sinking sun had paved the waters with a shimmering brass. From a western course of windows he could see the mountain peaks wrapped in copper and purple; and in the midst of this a patch of carmine marked the distant fortress of LaFerrière.

The scientist set about dressing for dinner, thinking of the fortress, the vanished tyrant Christophe, and Vauquière's odd defense of tyrants and tyranny. That was an odd position, as if the human race were created for the especial purpose of leaving behind it monuments. His thoughts drifted to his engagement with Governor Boisrond. At two o'clock in the morning he and Governor Boisrond would set out for the camp of Jean LaFronde. A mixture of anxiety and curiosity arose in Poggioli as to the outcome of such a quixotic adventure. What really was Governor Boisrond trying to do? Cast discredit on Jean LaFronde? Poggioli had a feeling that behind any such vague purpose as that, the huge black man had some clear cut, definite object. The black giant's direct logical actions suggested this. But what this purpose might be, Poggioli could not fancy. He was still thinking about it when the dinner gong sounded its chimes through the building. Poggioli finished his toilet and went down.

AT THE dinner table Armand was bubbling over with news of the market-place. He said everybody was discussing which would make the better governor, a Papa Loi or an ordinary man. It seemed the servants who had started to LaFerrière with the lunch failed to reach the fortress in time for the governor's party, so they had given the food to the negro prisoners.

While they ate, these seven men debated the question Poggioli had left with them—the relative merits of a Papa Loi and an ordinary man for governor. The servants in turn had seized on the question, and when they returned to Cap Haitien, they had offered it to the wisdom of the market-place. The result was that everybody was vociferously debating the political expediency of Papa Loi and non-Papa Loi governors.

"See what you have done, M'sieu Poggioli," cried Armand with tears of laughter in his black eyes. "You've introduced a new note into Haitian politics. This will become a national issue. Miracle workers will run for the presidency on Papa Loi tickets."

"How did the sentiment go?" inquired Boisrond, taking the question with perfect seriousness.

"An even split," laughed Armand, wiping his eyes. "I never saw a single debater without an opponent."

Vauquière was philosophically amused at the question.

"I say the Papa Lois will win. The human idea of a final judgment day with a deity as an arbiter is nothing more than a magnified Papa Loi, a judge who can read the human heart."

"But everybody dreads the judgment day," laughed Armand.

"You are wrong," persisted the physician. "Every human being thinks a really omniscient judge would pardon him because deep in his heart every person feels all his acts are justified, even to the most wicked and foolish. That is the real root of religion, messieurs—humanity's longing for an omnipotent being who understands and pardons all."

Poggioli scarcely followed this odd discussion, but pursued his way through the many courses of the dinner preoccupied with the thoughts of his own and Governor Boisrond's coming adventure. Now and then he glanced at the governor who sat at the

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head of the table swathed in a great napkin in the French style. Each time he wished for the governor's success, and more and more feared a tragic outcome.

Poggioli finished his meal, and soon after excused himself and retired to his suite of rooms. He switched on the light in his big cool chamber and began to lay out his clothes for his early morning expedition. Then he began to fill a bag with certain psychological instruments he thought he might use. It was barely possible that he might make some genuine advance in the theory of primitive occultism. Here his natural scientific enthusiasm caught him up, and he fancied himself making all sorts of laboratory experiments upon both the *caco* leader and his victims. He would read the result of his studies before the psychological association. He had quite a moment there alone in his rooms.

When he had finished his bags, the scientist's enthusiasm moved him to walk downstairs and out on the terrace where he sought the sedative of a cigaret and the star-sown sky.

He chose a beat on the edge of the terrace between the dark outline of a bougainvillea on one end and the lace-like film of a frangipanni on the other and began a slow peripatetic musing back and forth.

His nerves were still jumpy with the idea of some new, brilliant theory on primitive psychology. If he could determine some quantitative relation between, say, heart beats and insensibility to pain, his discovery might go down in the history of psychology as "Poggioli's Theorem."

And then he would become immortal.

Along with Gallileo, Helmholtz, Freud—

Poggioli moved up and down the terrace with the stars in his eyes.

Once, as he was turning away from the bougainvillea, he heard a faint rustling in its inky shadows. It did not disturb his musings. He made two more circuits when he heard it again more strongly. He was just leaving the heavy bush. This time it caused him to glance over his shoulder. He saw an indistinct figure leap out of the foliage. In the darkness it seemed to be running from him, but the very next breath he saw it was some man charging him. Poggioli tried to fling himself in some position of defense. As his assailant closed with him he glimpsed the glint of steel in the starlight. He grabbed at the knife hand, caught the wrist, the next instant staggered backward under the rush. He struggled to hold off the steel and shouted for help at the top of his lungs.

The miscreant tried to jerk the knife loose, but Poggioli clung on desperately. He jammed his hand into the fellow's throat, but the assassin clenched down his chin while he slowly bent Poggioli's arm backward. The psychologist leaped back, whirled the fellow round, struck with all his might. He yelled and lunged backward again. At that moment his foot went over the edge of the terrace.

Through some mental twist Poggioli received a hideous impression that he was falling from the enormous battlements of LaFerrière. As he fell he shrieked his despair. The next moment he struck the soft grass a few feet below him. His assailant was somehow flung completely over his head, out into the very edge of the jungle.

Poggioli kicked desperately to straighten up and receive another attack when lights came swarming across the terrace. Voices shouted in creole:

"Who is it? What's the matter?"

The psychologist scrambled upright and saw Governor Boisrond and Armand and half a dozen guards with rifles. He began panting out that he had been attacked; his assailant must have darted off in the jungle.

"What direction?" roared the governor.

Poggioli pointed.

"Lie down!" rumbled the governor, making a smashing downward gesture at Poggioli; then, "Make ready men! Take aim! Fire!"

Came a terrific crash of old fashioned American Krags right over Poggioli's head. The six guards had discharged their rifles in the direction Poggioli had indicated. The American realized what was about to happen in time to throw himself flat on his stomach. Even then the crash of the rifles sent pains through his ears.

"Charge down there; arrest anybody you find!" roared Boisrond, and the palace guards dashed off into the thick growth with their lights.

The American stood watching them with shaken nerves, until their lanterns got farther and farther away, and were, at last, mere dim reflections among the trees.

"I don't suppose they hit anybody or

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will find anybody," grumbled Boisrond as they disappeared, "but that was the only thing to do.

A few moments later Vauquière came running out of the mansion, asking the cause of the uproar.

The governor explained with his customary precision.

"What effrontery! Right here in the governor's grounds! Who do you suppose did it?"

Poggioli had no idea. He recalled now a perfume of sandalwood about his assailant.

"It may not have been meant for you at all, M'sieu Poggioli, or it may have been LaFronde's answer to your proposed visit to his camp, or it may have been pique at your philosophy about the undesirability of a Papa Loi for governor—"

He broke off, pondering.

"It wasn't Jean LaFronde at all," rumbled Boisrond.

"Why do you say that?" asked Vauquière in surprize.

"He hasn't had time to get our message and return instructions. It's somebody in Cap Haitien."

"His spies, perhaps?"

"They wouldn't have ventured such an attack on their own responsibility."

"You may be right," agreed Vauquiere without confidence.

A slight sound behind the three men caused them to turn; Poggioli and Vauquière with a start, Boisrond deliberately. Then they saw the governor's disreputable hound sniffing at his master's legs and wagging a dim tail at the happy reunion.

THE hound seemed to give some obscure cue of action, for the men turned and started briskly down the shell road to see if the *batteau* of the soldiers had scared up any game. They walked by the light of the governor's lantern, and were perhaps half way down when they heard shouts and a shot from the direction of the gate; then a loud altercation.

They hurried on, when at a turn in the road they saw a flashing of lighted lanterns; then just inside the gate they made out three men, confronted by eight or nine guards with rifles.

"Look!" cried Vauquière. "They've got them after all!"

Poggioli went forward trying to see who it was when he heard one of the guards cry—

"Yes, you is been in here, too, white man, 'cause you tried to kill the voodoo inspector!"

To this a furious nasal voice rapped out in English:

"If you niggers contradict me one more time, I'll wipe you off the face of the earth! Where is this —— Poggioli? I want to see him!"

Another of the three bayed men repeated in a composed business-like voice—

"Yes, we want to talk to him."

"Talk to him!" shouted the guard. "You mean you want to kill him."

Poggioli and his companions entered the circle of lanterns and, to their amazement, made out the tall angular form of Mr. Clay, the trig figure of Mr. Osterwasski and a black man whom Poggioli did not recognize.

Boisrond growled to Poggioli—

"See what they say?"

The American stepped forward toward the trio.

"What do you want with me?" he asked, still amazed.

One of the guards answered—

"Want to stick a knife in you, m'sieu."

Clay turned and pointed a long forefinger at the guard—

"Nigger, interrupt me again, and I'll blow you to Kingdom Come, so help me!"

Poggioli advanced on these men who had attacked him a moment before.

"Want to see me?"

"Yes, sir," snapped the collector of customs with stiff formality.

"Which one of you fellows tried to knife me back up on the terrace not three minutes ago?" inquired the psychologist peering at the three.

"None of us," snapped out Clay. "We entered the gate a moment ago. It was unguarded. A moment later these niggers came running down through the brush, and one of them fired a shot at us."

"But you did come here hunting me?"

"We came here to see you, sir, to interview you, to reason with you!"

Mr. Clay delivered this in such a stiff formal tone that Poggioli was half convinced of the fellow's sincerity.

"Well," said Poggioli at length, "here I am. What do want to say?"

Clay motioned with his head—

"Let's get away from this —— black riffraff."

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"No," said the psychologist, "somebody tried to stick a knife in me and the guards seem to have rounded up you fellows. Whatever you want to say you can say here."

The customs officer cleared his throat, stared angrily at Poggioli and finally asked—

"You're a white man, ain't you?"

"Certainly," said Poggioli surprized.

"Then what you mixing up with this Boisrond gang for? —— knows, us white folks here in Cap Haitien has plenty of trouble without you comin' buttin' in!"

This was said so accusingly and with such long-standing irritation that Poggioli was convinced of his sincerity.

"Mr. Clay," said Poggioli a little more amicably, "I was entirely unaware that you were mixed up in any way with this trouble. Governor Boisrond certainly is in difficulties. He sent for me and—"

"Didn't know we were in trouble!" cried the collector. "Suppose you had investments in this —— island, and suddenly the natives should take over the government, the *cacos* break loose and rob your plantations, the niggers quit work and take to the brush and everything go to the ——. Wouldn't you call that trouble?"

"That's exactly what I came here for," interrupted the psychologist. "To help clear out the *cacos*."

"Clear out the *cacos!* What are you talking about, Mr. Poggioli?" ejaculated Osterwasski.

"That is precisely my mission," repeated the psychologist.

"Ma-an," drawled Clay, "is it possible that you are such a —— stupid idiot that Boisrond has pulled the wool over your eyes like that?"

"I'm in Governor Boisrond's employ," repeated Poggioli sharply.

The group stood regarding each other at this *impasse*, then Clay once more nodded for Poggioli to follow him, and he and Osterwasski withdrew a few steps. This time Poggioli, with certain misgivings, followed.

"Well, what do you want?" he asked in a somewhat lower tone when they halted.

"Don't you know that Governor Boisrond is the *caco* chief of this island?" asked Clay, sotto voce.

"Certainly not!" cried Poggioli.

"Well, he is!"

"Boisrond a *caco?*"

"He was a *caco* before he got to be governor," snapped Clay.

"Yes, I knew that," admitted Poggioli.

"Once a thief always a thief. Ain't that right, Mr. Osterwasski?"

The insurance man nodded gravely.

"But gentlemen, what reason, what proof—"

"You tell him, Osterwasski," nodded Clay. "Tell him how this —— *caco* governor insures his own plantations, then robs 'em hisself and collects the insurance off your comp'ny."

Osterwasski nodded.

"That's correct, Mr. Poggioli," he stated with the cool precision of a business man. "We are now defending two or three insurance suits on just those grounds. When you met us this morning in Mr. Clay's automobile, we were returning from a search for a witness, a colored man named Minot, but Boisrond had spirited him away. He can't be found."

"Now those are the facts, Mr. Poggioli," put in Clay, "and we've come to ask you as a white man to pull loose from a —— thievin' clique like this and leave 'em."

POGGIOLI could not doubt the sincerity of these men in their present contention. He attempted to put forward his own opinion.

"Gentlemen, I am positive you are wrong about Governor Boisrond. He brought me to this island himself to help rid his department of the *caco* chief, Jean LaFronde."

At this the two men stared at one another and each burst into characteristic laughter, Clay's loud and sardonic, Osterwasski's silent and skeptical.

"Then why did he bring me here?" demanded the scientist with a certain pungency.

"Why, to make a figgerhead of you," returned Clay readily, "to pretend he was after the *cacos*. Now, for instance—" here Clay stepped closer and tapped Poggioli on the chest—"suppose he was after the *cacos*. What account would a city-bred Yankee like you be to him? You wouldn't be worth two whoops in ——. Even you ort to know that." Here Clay ceased his tapping and nodded comfortably, "That's why he picked on you, Mr. Poggioli. Because you're a zero. You don't mean nothin'."

Such frankness astonished and annoyed

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the psychologist who, being a college instructor, was not accustomed to such an attitude.

"You are mistaken about that," he replied stiffly. "I am here for a very definite purpose."

"What's that?" asked Clay indifferently.

"To expose the falsity of Jean LaFronde's claims to voodooism and help swing public sentiment away from him."

"Help swing what?"

"Public sentiment."

"Public ——. They ain't no public in this island. Nothing but a black riffraff. And how in the —— are you going to swing them?"

"By demonstrating the falsity of Jean LaFronde's claims."

"Ye-es, I imagine these black bucks would understand your demonstration. I imagine it would have a lot of effect."

Here Poggioli felt that perhaps his own case was a little weak. He concluded with:

"Well, at any rate, that's why Governor Boisrond hired me. My personal objective is to study folk psychology. I will at least accomplish that much."

Here Mr. Osterwasski had a sudden idea for he said:

"Look here, Mr. Clay, don't you see through this? They are going to use Mr. Poggioli to prove there is such a person as Jean LaFronde. I'll venture they are going to take him to LaFronde's camp. That would about cinch their insurance case."

Clay nodded in sudden enlightenment—

"That's about what Boisrond's up to. Pretty —— smart nigger!"

The fact that Osterwasski had hit upon this much truth carried a certain weight with Poggioli. He struck off on a new line—

"Who attacked me a while ago? You men?"

"Certainly not," from Osterwasski. "You might have life insurance in my own company for all I know."

"Then it must have been one of La Fronde's agents. That shows there is such a man as LaFronde and that he is opposed to Governor Boisrond."

Clay snorted.

"More circumstantial evidence they are manufacturing. But all right, Mr. Poggioli, suppose there is a LaFronde, which there ain't. And suppose you could help run him out, which you couldn't, still I ask you as one white man to another to drop this thing."

"On what grounds, now?" queried Poggioli. "I thought you were against all *cacos*."

"I'm against *cacoism* when the governor is his own *caco*. But if there is really another *caco* somewhere out in the brush, I say for ——'s sake let him alone. Let him keep raising —— until he brings back the American control and we get a decent government again. Or if he doesn't do that, maybe we'll get a political reshuffle from Port au Prince. Then I'm going to recommend a man of my own, a dependable nigger who knows his place and will do what we say."

"Who's that?" asked Poggioli curiously.

"LeClerc here, my assistant collector of customs." Clay nodded at the brown man who had stood a listener to all this conversation. "He's a good nigger, knows his place. Make him governor and the people with property here in Cap Haitien won't have no more trouble. We'll run things. *Cacoism* won't last long."

Poggioli nodded enlightened.

"I see what you mean."

"Sure you do. So quit this black bear right now and tell him you're through."

The psychologist stood pondering Mr. Clay's stratagem. He reached for his case and thoughtfully lighted a cigaret.

"Mr. Clay," he asked, "when you say property holders, you really mean, of course, the white population in Cap Haitien?"

"Nachelly."

"How many are there in the department?"

Clay thought—

"We-ell, about twenty—twenty-four—twenty-six, counting you and Osterwasski here."

"Two dozen?"

"Yes, sir."

"And how many negroes?"

"Oh, —— knows. Fifty or a hundred thousand, more maybe."

"Had it ever struck you, Mr. Clay, that fifty or a hundred thousand persons ought to be allowed to run their own country in their own way and not be forced to arrange their political life for the convenience of two dozen foreigners?"

Came a blank silence as both Osterwasski and Clay stared at this novel point of view; then Clay burst out with pent-up indignation.

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"Allowed to run their own government! Of all —— fool notions! Don't you know we Americans will give 'em a better government than they've got? Don't you know we'll keep down *cacoism* and insurrections? Don't you know we'll make their property safe, same as our own, and their lives too? Why, we'll give 'em roads, schools, churches, hospitals, things they'll never in the world git for themselves, and yet you stand up and say, 'Leave 'em alone!' That's the ——est fool talk out of a white man I ever heard! Come on, Osterwasski, I told you this feller was no good the minute I saw him riding with Doc Vauquière!"

With this final and complete damnation, Mr. Clay turned on his heel and marched away through the night. His two companions followed him without another word to Poggioli.

The governor's guards, although they clearly suspected Clay of attempted murder, made no effort to stop him.

The psychologist turned about and slowly rejoined Governor Boisrond. The huge black man probably had caught the drift of the conversation, for the voices of the men had been lifted several times in anger and surprize. But all he said to Poggioli was—

"Be ready to start at two."

"I'll be ready," said the psychologist. Then, not seeing Vauquière, he asked where he was.

He went back to the house. He wanted a little rest. He has a good deal of professional work this time of the year. A lot of paludismo in the country."

ONCE again in his suite in the governor's mansion, Poggioli went to bed and attempted to sleep, but the sharp and contradictory incidents of the afternoon danced in his thoughts like the pieces of a jig saw puzzle demanding to be pieced into a coherent whole.

The psychologist tried to drive the problem from his mind and sleep until his two o'clock engagement, but in the very midst of his effort he would wonder:

Could Governor Boisrond possibly be Jean LaFronde? Was he, Poggioli, being duped to be made a witness in a vicious lawsuit?

He tried to sleep again, but other angles of the riddle stole into his mind. Who had attacked him on the terrace? Could it have been LeClerc, the assistant collector? Had the attack been a *bona fide* attempt upon his life, or was that, too, as Clay had suggested, another bit of manufactured evidence?

Poggioli lay thinking, trying to resense the fight, but could capture nothing more definite than a blur of strain and action, then his horrifying fall over the terrace.

Through the tricky mental associations of approaching sleep, Poggioli seized on his illusion on the terrace that he was falling from the battlements of LaFerrière and he speculated upon it with a sort of absorbed emptiness. LaFerrière, its battlements, its terrific height, its somber African architecture, Vauquière's defense of tyrants and tyranny. Somehow these purely extraneous details seemed to hold the solution of the riddle which filled his thoughts. A little later he was completely asleep.

Some time after that Poggioli was shocked out of a troubled slumber by a touch on his shoulder. As he started up in confusion, he saw his lights were on and a negro servant stood in his room.

"The governor told me to wake you at two, m'sieu," said the servant in blurred French.

Poggioli rubbed his eyes, blinked.

"Is he waiting for me below?"

"There is a carriage below, m'sieu."

"That's the governor."

Poggioli tumbled out of bed and got into hunting trousers, high boots and a rough tweed coat. He picked up his bag of instruments and went clumping down stairs. When he reached the piazza he saw a barouche awaiting him on the driveway. The side lights of the vehicle were burning and showed a man on the driver's seat. Poggioli went out and, as he stepped into the vehicle, he wished the governor good morning. Then he saw the dark interior of the barouche was empty. He paused on the step to ask the driver—

"Is the governor to meet us here?"

"I don't know, m'sieu. I was ordered to pick up a man here and take him eleven kilometers on the Ouanaminthe road."

"So you don't think the governor is coming?"

"I don't know, m'sieu."

Poggioli got inside a little uncertainly and drew the blanket over his legs, for the night was cold. The driver touched his horses and the barouche moved off.

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The horses went at a ringing trot, and soon passed out of the grounds into the market-place. Here were great two-wheeled carts already standing by the stalls, while their owners shivered around bonfires awaiting the coming of the stall keepers to buy their produce. There was something solid and matter-of-fact about these early market carts that relieved a certain air of unreality which hung over Poggioli's adventure. The barouche whisked on out of the *place*, past an ancient cathedral which towered against the stars as a relic of the days when Cap Haitien was the "Paris of the Western World." A little later they were spinning through the squalid purlieus of the town and then along the new American road among the slovenly estates. After about three-quarters of an hour's traveling, the barouche stopped and the driver called down—

"This is the place, m'sieu."

Poggioli stuck out his head and saw a dim empty countryside and a dark background of the mountains beyond. Everything was quiet except the breathing of the horses.

"There is no one here, driver," said Poggioli.

"No, m'sieu," said the driver.

"There must have been some mistake. The governor was to have joined me. It's chilly and uncomfortable." He shivered and added, "We've evidently missed connections."

"*Oui*, m'sieu."

Poggioli sat a little while longer.

"I think the best thing I can do now is to drive back home with you."

The driver hesitated, then said apologetically—

"M'sieu, I am very sorry, but the governor ordered me to bring a man here."

Poggioli looked at the fellow.

"Well, you have?"

"But he did not order me to take a man back."

The psychologist considered this with rising resentment.

"You mean you won't take me back?"

The driver said in a humble tone:

"M'sieu, if I take you back, the governor will have me punished for disobeying him. If I refuse to take you back, the governor will have me punished severely for discourtesy to one of his guests."

Poggioli remained in the carriage for perhaps a minute longer. It struck him that this lonely ride might possibly be a part of some prearranged plan. The driver sat silent on his high seat; the horses pranced restlessly in the cold. At last Poggioli took his bag and clambered out into the road. He stretched his numb legs and walked stiffly up and down.

"Well," he said at length, "I don't know what to do. I don't want to get you into trouble. I can get back somehow if I don't go on. You may go."

The driver tipped his cap very courteously, turned the horses about and vanished in the night at a swift trot in the direction of Cap Haitien.

WHEN he was left entirely by himself in the obscure highway, the feeling that this was some prearranged plan vanished entirely. Poggioli then knew that Governor Boisrond simply had overslept and he had launched forth alone on this wild goose chase. Then he reflected that he had come forth alone in the night for the express purpose of meeting a band of outlaws. The hazards of such an enterprise presented themselves to him for the first time in their true guise. He listened intently, but all he could hear was the shrill far-away challenge of a game cock and, over toward the mountains, the hooting of an owl.

Poggioli began a nervous speculation on exactly how the outlaws would find him when he heard the sound of padded feet coming up the road. He became motionless and opened his mouth to hear more perfectly. Then he saw two dim figures with rifles approaching him through the darkness. As they came he heard them mumbling in an undertone. They were almost on him when one of the figures paused and grunted—

"White man aroun' here."

His companion replied—

"How you know?"

"Smell lak something dead."

"Maybe it is something dead."

"*Non*, m'sieu, white man."

Here the two blacks came to a standstill, looking and peering intently. Presently one grunted—

"There he is—by the cabbage palm."

With a little feeling of surprize, Poggioli noted that he really was over in the edge of the road hard by the bole of a palm tree. He was unaware of when he had got there.

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He was momentarily amused at his own subconscious maneuvers. He called out briskly enough—

"Can you boys tell me the way to Jean LaFronde's camp?"

At this came a frightened gasping:

"Me! Us! *Non, non,* m'sieu! We good *soldats!* Rural guards! Don't want to meet no *cacos*, m'sieu."

"I want to go to the *caco* camp," repeated Poggioli, considerably heartened by the fact that these men were not going there.

"Ain't you white man, m'sieu?"

"Yes."

"I thought *les blancs* hated *cacos*."

"I had heard this Jean LaFronde was a Papa Loi," returned the psychologist in a matter-of-fact tone, "I wanted to investigate him."

At this the two soldiers fell into great consternation—

"Fuh ——'s sake! Investigate a Papa Loi!"

And the other one gasped—

"White man, is you dat voodoo inspector we's heard about in Cap Haitien?"

Poggioli admitted his identity.

"Good ——, niggah, no wondah I smelled dis man. He wuks wid de debbil."

Whatever errand moved the two negroes through the night, they possessed the large leisure of all Haitians. Now they stood staring at the man who followed the fantastic trade of inspecting the emanations from hell. At last one of them said:

"We ain't gwine to de *cacos*, *buckra*, but we is gwine kinder in de direction of the *caco* camp. You come along wid us if you feels our comp'ny would be more welcome to you dan for to ramble along by youse'f as you now is."

A certain touch of self-consciousness about this winding sentence told Poggioli that he was receiving a formal invitation to become one of the party. He replied, a little ungratefully, perhaps—

"I might as well. I'll freeze standing here."

So he started on with them, his shoes *tap-tapping* on the hard road, and the naked feet of the negroes padding in unison with them. As he closed in with them he saw that they too had shoes, brogans which are regularly furnished the *rurales*, but these brogans were swung over their elbows by the laces. This perhaps was for comfort, and also to reserve their footwear for dress occasions.

The two soldiers moved along silently with an occasional side glance at the highly questionable white man by their side. One of the negroes was short and stocky, the other large. At last the short man mumbled—

"I know why you come out at night, *buckra*."

"Why?"

Another silence, then—

"Ain't you de white man who said to de niggahs over in LaFerrière dat an ordinary man would make a bettah guv'nah dan a Papa Loi?"

"I believe I said something like that," admitted Poggioli, beginning to be amused.

"Uh-huh, dat's why you come out at night."

"What do you mean?" queried the psychologist puzzled.

"Some of the ig'nant niggers was suprized to hear you talkin' aginst yose'f like dat."

Poggioli became attentive to catch the idea back of this disconnection.

"Talking against myself. I don't understand."

The short one chuckled.

"You don't. Well, you bein' a Papa Loi inspector, we know who sent you out."

"Who?"

"De gin'ral of a army sends out officers to inspect his army, m'sieu. De president sends out men to collect taxes fuh de president. De daddy sends word to his young chillun by his old chillun—"

And here the stocky one fell into a highly significant silence.

A possibility of what the negro was driving at came over Poggioli in a mixture of amazement and amusement.

"You mean you think the devil must have sent out a voodoo inspector?"

The stocky one adhered strictly to innuendo.

"If I was to lebel dis rifle at you an' pull de triggah, eider the gun wouldn't fire or de bullet wouldn't come out or it would switch aroun' an' go spank into my own h'art."

"Don't try it," said Poggioli seriously.

"I sho won't."

And to reduce the liability he turned the muzzle of his rifle across his shoulder so that it pointed away from Poggioli into the ear of his companion.

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"Of cose," continued the short negro meditatively, "we all knowed why you said a ordinary man would be a bettah guv'nah dan a Papa Loi."

"Why?"

"To test us."

"Test you?"

" 'Vide the sheep frum de goats."

By a sudden intuition, Poggioli realized that this was a characteristic movement of the Haitian mind; to interpret an argument for a normal governor as a device of the devil seeking to pick out the faithful among his followers.

"Dat's why you come out to inspect Papa Loi at night," concluded the stocky soldier, reverting to the beginning of his argument, a point which Professor Poggioli of the Ohio State University had forgot.

WITHIN the distance, say, of two miles, Poggioli and his companions caught up with a number of rural guards, and a little late still others overtook them, so that at last a group of six or eight men marched on through the night toward some destination, nobody said where. However there was a negative certainty about the matter. They said they were not *cacos* and were not going to the *caco* camp.

At a certain point the whole band deserted the high road and took to a footpath through the mountains, and still no particular member of the expedition seemed to be a guide. It gave Poggioli the impression that nobody was leading and everybody following. Still, they managed to guide themselves without hesitation.

The path they now followed was a mere crack in a dense brake of giant grass and wild coffee trees. They walked single file, and the way was so inkily black they were forced to reach out and touch each other to stay together. As Poggioli stumbled along the beginning slopes of the mountain, it occurred to him rather belatedly that he was in the midst of a string of liars, and that this was an escort sent out to conduct him to the *caco* camp.

From the turnings and twistings of the line, Poggioli deduced that he was being led intentionally through a maze which would be impossible for him to retrace. These windings no doubt were a safeguard to protect the *cacos* from governmental attack. The line in the darkness scrambled and climbed, circled and turned back on its course and hit off at acute angles.

Poggioli grew short of breath; his heart thumped; a sweat broke out on him as he struggled to keep up with the steady swinging pace of the black men. Presently the oddness of this encounter forced itself upon him. As he panted along with aching muscles, he wondered how Governor Boisrond had ever timed the barouche so that he would fall in exactly with a party of *cacos* or deserters or whatever these men were. This line of march gave a strong color of truth to Mr. Clay's assertion that Boisrond and Jean LaFronde were one and the same person. As the climb grew more onerous, Poggioli thought with rising indignation that perhaps all this was a mere detail in an insurance swindle.

The more he chewed on this thought, the more acrid he became. Clay's whole argument repeated itself in his thoughts, and it all seemed true. He was toiling in the midst and for the benefit of a complicated fake.

Poggioli stumbled upward, angry and hot. His legs ached in the calves and above the knees. Grass seed and the chaff from leaves sifted down the back of his perspiring neck and set up an intolerable itching, which changed when he scratched it, to a burning.

The psychologist was in that state of exquisite irritability characteristic of a nervous man when from behind and above the party came the challenge of a voice.

The line halted. When Poggioli looked up he saw the moth-colored light of dawn filling the tops of the coffee trees. Then he saw, that the party had come to a sheer cliff some twenty feet high and on top of this, barely discernible against the fretwork of treetops and sky, stood a *caco* guard.

A brief conversation passed between one of the negroes in the darkness below and the guard on the cliff; the psychologist caught the single phrase, "voodoo inspector." This seemed to satisfy the guard, for the men set about climbing the rock. The first man began mounting the sheer face, clinging to crevices which he remembered and groped for in the darkness. Poggioli could make out the bulk of his form against the faint grayness of the stone. The first climber then reached down to direct the hands of the next man in line; then the two forms inched up the precipice.

As this measuring worm of men crept up

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the stone face, Poggioli moved slowly up to the take-off, and presently an invisible man ahead of him clambered upward and became a blur against the upper grayness. When this fellow found some unseen anchorage, he reached down, caught Poggioli's hand and placed it in the first crack in the sheer escarpment.

The white man caught hold and began raking his feet over the lower surface of the cliff trying for some crack, but either there was none or his feet were so insensitive through the leather of his boots that he could not feel it. At any rate he stood pawing futilely until a negro behind him braced his foot and gave him a fulcrum. The psychologist went up a step and the man above caterpillared up another half length, then reached down and guided the scientist's hand again.

This time Poggioli found further ascent extremely difficult. When he left the negro below he was forced to hold up his weight on the very tips of his fingers and boots. He could hardly spare the strength of a hand to explore upward for the next niche. As he tried it his body sank downward, but he caught the next anchorage in a sort of lucky grab. He had no strength at all to reach down and show the lower man the hold he had deserted. He could only center his strength on his clinging fingers. Two more times he made that hazardous upreach and lucky catch, and somehow succeeded in dragging his own immense weight up to a new height. But now, when he was about twelve feet from the ground, his tortured fingers began an irresistible straightening out. He exerted every ounce of force to hold his niche, but he saw that in a minute or two he would drop. The fall would mean a bruise, perhaps a break. The man above was groping down to guide Poggioli higher, but the psychologist did not dare to relax a single straining muscle.

"I—can't make it," he gasped in a whisper.

The top man grunted something, shifted himself somehow against the face of the ledge, stretched down like a great monkey and succeeded in getting his fingertips around Poggioli's wrist. His grip hurt; then he began a careful, powerful upward drawing. At first Poggioli thought he was being helped; then with a little shiver of horror he realized that he was being lifted bodily. He knew he must fall. He tried not to let go his anchorage, but was lifted off. His body swung out, dangled against the cliff. He quit breathing with the certainty that the precarious hold of his helper must break under this added strain and they would both dash down the cliff together.

Then to his amazement and increased suspense, he felt himself rise slowly, very slowly up the cliff, past the bulk of the black man. He could feel the fellow's hand quivering under the strain; a hundred and seventy-two-pound dead weight forced upward while the fellow clung spiderwise to the face of the precipice.

ONCE Poggioli's body bumped against the black man's. His trembling ascent stopped; the man wheezed; Poggioli started upward again; on up. At last the lifter gave a tortured gasp—

"Take him!"

After an interminable period, the hand of the *caco* guard on top of the cliff reached down and caught the scientist's fingers. A little later he was swung over the top to ignominious safety.

Poggioli was never so ashamed of his physical condition. The thought of what the man below had endured wrung at his pride. He sat shaken on the edge of the cliff vowing silently that he would take setting up exercises; he would whip himself into some physical fitness. His hand, which had been gripped ached with the renewed flow of blood. He peered down and watched his helper follow up the cliff. He came up, an arm's reach at a time, no niggling, but with the effortless mechanical certainty of an insect. He was a bulky fellow, and when he looked up to see how to catch the top, Poggioli grew almost weak with amazement to see the massive rolling features of Governor Boisrond.

He stared dumbly at the giant who, however, did not bestow upon the scientist the slightest recognition. Then as the black Samson gained the top and stood up in the faint light, Poggioli became dubious about the giant's identity. The scientist sat a moment longer, resting, puffing exhaustedly and watching the fellow. The big man wore the uniform of the *rurales*. He had a rifle. Besides, it was improbable that so old a man as Boisrond would be able to exert so vast a strength as this man had shown. The resemblance might have been a trick of

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the gray light. Poggioli stared after the fellow.

However, the only man in Haiti who wanted the psychologist to reach the *caco* camp earnestly enough to lift him up a precipice with one hand was Governor Boisrond himself.

Clay's theory that Boisrond was La-Fronde returned to Poggioli's mind. He could not make heads or tails out of any of it. But if this were Boisrond, then Poggioli hoped from the depth of his heart that he would win. The natural hero worship due enormous strength and courage caught up the psychologist and changed him from spectator to rank partisan. He didn't know what Boisrond wanted; he didn't care what Boisrond wanted. His sole desire now was that Boisrond should get it, whatever it might be.

All the men were up now and moving briskly along. Poggioli followed, wetting his dry lips with his tongue.

As the psychologist hurried forward, an extraordinary thing occurred. As he passed a certain point in the brush, he seemed to step out of the ordinary jungle silence into the rhythm of an enormous singing. It was as amazing as a buffet out of thin air. Yet what he heard was not the opening of a song; it was music in full flight. The rush of its phrasing, the hot tempo of a tom-tom, women's voices skirling up in an obligato of unutterable melancholy, made it impossible that what he heard should be the first crash of an overture.

Yet the possibility of a zone of complete silence contiguous to a sector of tremendous music astounded the psychologist.

The black men did not puzzle their heads about the phenomenon. The moment the beat fired their nerves, they broke into a run and a few minutes later, the little party stood on the edge of a great natural bowl in the mountains. It was filled with the blue shadows and opalescent lights of early dawn.

Presently Poggioli saw that a fire burned in the center of this natural amphitheater; but its flames, mixed with the light of morning until they were almost as transparent as the blaze of an alcohol lamp. As Poggioli stared, in the shadowy scene developed a great number of figures dancing, flinging up their arms and reeling about the almost invisible fire.

Beyond this center of action, the other side of the great bowl was formed by the sheer stone escarpment of the mountain, and on this, Poggioli made out what appeared to be a vast wavering human face. It was glimpsed or completely lost according to the heat waves from the central fire or the winding gossamer of the morning mists.

The whole ensemble looked so shadowy, was such an elusive mixture of gray dawn and delicate firelight like an opal in a porphyry bowl, that it seemed impossible this could be the source of such strong and imperious harmonies. But the concentration of the music now explained itself to the scientist. The shape of this great, natural sounding chamber focussed the sounds upward so that nothing could be heard three yards beyond the tonal zone. It was a perfect retreat in which the *cacos* could conduct their orgies unheard by the countryside.

One of the negroes now turned to Poggioli, and the men and said hurriedly in creole—

"I'll go tell him you are here," and he set off down the smooth grassy incline at top speed.

While their guide had gone down to announce their coming, Poggioli began studying Governor Boisrond once more, if the great soldier were indeed the executive. The huge negro peered at the scene with the narrowed eyes and poised posture of some animal stalking its prey. As Poggioli watched the expression of that massive rolling face, there suddenly dawned on the psychologist the real design of the black man in coming to the *caco* camp. He meant to make an abrupt assault on the *caco* leader in the midst of his men. If he could kill the Papa Loi with his bare hands such a *coup d'etat* would certainly reestablish the huge man's leadership over all the deserting rurales.

From the moment this intuition flashed on Poggioli, his whole attention centered on the great figure. The strange surroundings, the fire and central altar, the huge face outlined and partially carved on the opposite cliff, the sonant turmoil of the *cacos*—all became the mere dramatic accessories of the coming nemesis. It was all like a Greek play leading to a terrific and inevitable crux.

THE guide came running back. The newcomers started down into the bowl. The *caco* army were disposed in two long lines through which they must march down to the central altar. Poggioli noted vaguely their motley

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assortment of fire arms; ancient flint locks which had been preserved since the French invasion; cap and ball rifles; single shots and Krags brought in by the deserting *rurales*. Besides these every negro had a machete swung at his side; a heavy steel caneknife, which in the hands of a Haitian plantation worker could sever even Boisrond's powerful body at a blow.

At the apex of these two lines flamed the altar. It burned on a daïs of carved stone, a sort of devil's shrine for voodoo rites. In the center stood a pot or urn of red clay, and around this leaped the colorless flames. As an uncanny architectural detail, on each corner of the dais lay two skulls, a man's and a woman's. The queer thing was that these relics of mortality did not leap out at the attention, as such things usually do; they were reduced by the grimness of their surroundings to mere decorative details.

As Poggioli approached this altar, he scrutinized the two lines of *çacos* for some hint of LaFronde, but could not identify the *caco* chief. He expected to see a man with a knife in his wrist. There was nothing of the sort. With a little tug of dismay, he realized the voodoo priest had absented himself. It would be impossible for Boisrond suddenly to destroy the man whose power he meant to seize. The irony of the situation bit at the white man's nerves; that Boisrond should waste his enormous strength in a hopeless battering at these two lines of machetes from the sugar plantations.

The psychologist wondered apprehensively whether the giant would attack; he would be cut down; likewise their whole group might easily be killed. The skulls on the corners of the dais became rather more than ornaments. The scientist looked at them with a strained expression. As he did so his eyes followed the lines of the altar up to its center, and he suddenly observed something which took his breath—a figure wearing a grotesque African devil's mask stood motionless in the midst of the flames. Poggioli did not know how it got there or when it came.

As he stared at this extraordinary apparition, an odd observation was thrust upon him. This sinister figure was just the touch which welded the whole altar and background into a decorative whole. It held such a malign esthetic that even the skulls became mere bosses, the careless beading of a sculptor about his central figure.

At the sight, the six negro novices dropped their jaws and stared ready to collapse at a touch. Boisrond was attentively surveying this figure which was either in or behind a wall of flame. The ritual chanting of the *cacos* increased in volume with the appearance of their priest. Two of the black guards sprang forward and took the arms of the first novice in the line. The fellow went forward on legs that barely supported him.

Poggioli watched the ritual with tense attention, then his heart increased its beat as he saw the devil's mask step through the flames to meet the approaching recruit. He knew this detail would not be varied for any of the other candidates or for Boisrond, because the very essence of a ritual is its inviolability. The man behind the mask must now meet the black hercules at the altar of the skulls.

The thing grew in Poggioli's brain like the horror of a nightmare. He watched one after the other of the novices go up to the devil doctor. There would be a colloquy. The novice would touch his heart, then kneel, hold up an arm to the priest, who apparently made a slight incision and then placed the lips of the mask to the wound. Between each performance, there was a fumbling behind the robes of the devil doctor, and once Poggioli saw, but hardly observed, a shred of paper fall from the priest's skirts. The slow approach of the initiation to the huge Boisrond played on the scientist's nerves. It was like watching a fuse fizzle slowly toward a bomb. Mixed with this were certain apprehensions for his own safety. His brief musing was wiped from his mind by two guards coming for Boisrond.

They were powerful blacks and as the psychologist watched them he was conscious of a pulse in his neck. The three moved down between the files of *cacos* to the man in the devil's mask. The scientist watched with a strained feeling. Came the stereotyped colloquy. Boisrond knelt and held up his gorilla-like arm to the priest's operation. Each instant now, Poggioli expected him to make his lunge. But the devil doctor, skirting destruction, went on with his rigmarole of putting the mouth of the mask to the incision.

Now the black arm would crush the voodoo in an ursine grip. But the next moment, to the psychologist's confusion, the huge negro arose and walked away between

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his escorts. Still the scientist held his breath. This might be a clever trick to lead off the guards for a sudden charge back, but a little later he was too far away, he was walking off between his escorts to whatsoever place the other recruits had been led.

A chill weak feeling came over Poggioli; he stared with a slack jaw when he realized that Boisrond had run this gauntlet in order that he, Poggioli, might see and explain the rites they had just witnessed.

The impossibility of doing Boisrond any service whatever dismayed the American. There was nothing he could do. He knew the devil doctor standing in the fire was so much pure legerdemain, but Poggioli knew nothing of the mechanics of illusions. He could not explain it to the runaway rurales. In the midst of his chagrin, two negroes came forward for him. He went forward between them nervously, keeping step irresistibly to the immense chanting song. When he came to the mask he raised his voice and said in French:

"I am the psychologist who came out to see your feats and give a scientific explanation of them. I—I will make a report to the American Psychological Society."

AS HE said it this struck Poggioli as the queerest sentence ever uttered before a devil's altar decorated with human skulls. As he looked at the grotesque mask, he hoped in his heart that the man behind it would understand the complete pacifism of his errand. The heat of the flames, which seemed to be fed by some sort of oil in a trench in the stone, made him step back in discomfort and turn his face away.

The grotesque figure before him made a slight gesture and said in a somber tone:

"You may look; there is nothing to explain. All there is you see."

And with that, the figure stepped back into the flames and seemed to disappear into the stone pediment which upheld the great red clay urn. When the voodoo doctor withdrew from between Poggioli and the flames, the heat was great enough to drive the scientist in discomfort from the daïs.

That ended the ceremony. The *cacos* fell out of formation laughing and talking. They called loudly to each other that it, the drama they had just witnessed, was *bon bagaille*, a phrase which the Haitians use in indiscriminate praise. It evidently had satisfied in them a certain appetite for pageantry and dramatic mystery, which in the white race is not so well developed.

The trench of flaming oil gradually burned low, began making yard-long flickers around the stone pediment and finally, with a sort of hushed snap, went out. Some slatternly negro women came up with manioc paste and poured it on the hot stones to fry cakes. Everywhere was a bouyant air; a tingling of good spirits as a left-over from the performance. The black men strolled about and chaffed the women. The bowl was filled with the loud, oily laughter of negroes.

Poggioli was filled with anxiety to do something for Boisrond. He walked around the altar and stared at it. But there was really nothing to explain. The mechanism of the illusion must have been a simple trap door, but he didn't happen to know where it was. Also the phenomenon of fire walking lay in that mixed region between hypnosis, thick skin on the walker's feet and the use of ointments which did not conduct heat. There was nothing new to say.

The scientist walked about the outer edge of the daïs, looking for the trap door, but the stones were still too hot for him to come close. As he scrutinized the surface from a little distance, he noticed the bit of paper which he now remembered seeing the Papa Loi drop. He bent away from the heat of the stones and reached an arm after it. He looked at it with interest. It proved to be a paper band which had come from around some vial. It bore the address of a French drug manufacturing concern. The incongruity of such a label in a *caco* camp struck the American. He had suspected the use of drugs more or less all along, but he felt they should be native drugs, alkaloids brewed out of the jungle.

This running in French drugs in voodoo rites seemed malpractise, somehow. It also suggested that the voodoo priest had avenues of communication with the outside world, and something of a technical education. He recalled Boisrond had warned him of just these probabilities when he had first taken the case. Poggioli looked at the band again. In the dim light it appeared to have nothing on it beyond the signature of the firm printed in black; the name of the drug no doubt had been erased, thoughtfully, by LaFronde.

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The little tag cast an interesting and puzzling light over the devil doctor. The fellow must not have risen up from the natives, he must have come down from the upper classes; some Haitian schooled in Paris where all the wealthier citizens go. At any rate this stamped the devil doctor as a pure charlatan who did not even ignorantly believe in his own mysteries. Poggioli slipped the band in his vest pocket with a little tang of disgust.

The white man had seen all there was to see. The utter futility of the whole expedition irritated the American. Presently, after the human fashion, he began to justify himself, to shift the blame. He thought acridly that Boisrond should have known better than to launch so quixotic an adventure. He, Poggioli, could do nothing. To give these Haitian negroes a purely intellectual explanation of the *caco* rites would be the sheerest whistling down the wind. As Mr. Clay had said, "There was neither public nor public opinion in Haiti." The Haitian mind functioned in a child's world of illusion where, if a man stepped through a trap door, he vanished supernaturally and gained the oblation due gods and devils. The crassness, the hardihood of the imposture bit into Poggioli's patience.

The scientist moved among the four or five hundred *cacos* on the great green bowl in odd isolation. Wherever he went, it just happened that the negroes had all strolled to another part. The West Indian negroes, taken as a whole, have a fixed habit of avoiding white men when they can. But although the *cacos* avoided Poggioli, he could see they were laughing at him. It was clear all the *cacos* knew his purpose in their camp—an elucidator of mysteries, an inspector of the devil's works. They had taken him fearfully enough at first, but now he had shrunk to a mere ineffective human being, quite on a par with themselves. He heard a group laugh and ask why he didn't follow the Papa Loi through the fire down into the stone if he were the devil's inspector.

POGGIOLI'S thoughts came back to Boisrond. He wondered if the black giant was safe. He hoped he was at least safe, for the whole expedition had turned out wholly to the advantage of the *caco* chief. No matter what Poggioli told when he returned to Cap Haitien, it would strengthen LaFronde's position. If Poggioli told of the devil doctor's disappearance, the negroes would get the fact that he had disappeared, but would miss the explanation of how he vanished. If Poggioli said nothing at all, that would be taken as a confession of bewilderment and would swell LaFronde's reputation as a wizard.

No matter what he did, it would make good press agent material for the *cacos*. Indeed, he should have listened to Clay. The whole matter had turned against him so simply that he was surprized and chagrined he had not foreseen so obvious a termination.

His fiasco oppressed him so greatly that he had little attention for the really extraordinary scene around him. By this time pink sunlight slanted into the great green bowl and illuminated the face carved on the cliff. It was an incomplete carving, but even Poggioli's distracted attention saw that it was formed with that almost inhuman somberness which is characteristic of Egyptian and African sculpture. Already a number of negroes were climbing the face of the cliff, about to begin work on the great sinister countenance.

The conception of the work was as simple and giantesque as the African sphinx. The pink light slowly creeping down the western cliff gave it the appearance of rising mysteriously out of blue shadows, washed in sanies, growing taller and taller every moment like those monstrous images one sees in delirium. Its mere size somehow suggested the brevity and tragedy of human life. All enormous statuary suggests the swift coming of death to the mortals that made it. The certainty that it will stand through ages shrinks the life of man to the fluttering of a midge. And that is why all African works of art tend toward the gigantic. It is an art based on obliteration; it is an elevation of the somber and mysterious beauty of death.

This great face was filled with the same art motif which had sounded that morning in the frightened tempo of the tom-toms and the obligato of the *caco* women lifted in high and unutterable tragedy above the grim rhythmic basso of the men.

The white man jerked his attention from the somber spell of the great masque and set himself to the imperative need of finding Governor Boisrond again. He wondered

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apprehensively what had become of the executive. He looked around among the groups of *cacos*, but did not see any member of the party who had escorted him to this extraordinary place. He set out walking about the amphitheater with a notion of inquiring discreetly for his friends.

Somehow, he never could get any closer to any of the men. When he approached a group it seemed to break up casually, without any reference to him, and the individuals in it set off briskly about their business. After three or four such trials, even the psychologist discovered that these black folk were avoiding him. He did not know why; perhaps because of his satanic flavor as a voodoo inspector; or it may have been they were acting under orders from Jean LaFronde.

Poggioli's aimless, isolated movements to and fro in the huge *caco* amphitheater, carrying a bag of instruments, at last touched the psychologist himself with its droll irony. It was perhaps the most absurd position in which he had ever found himself.

In the bowl was the greatest variety of black folk; men, women and children, graybeards and crones. They lived in a row of *yagua* huts which dotted the rim of the huge concavity. The sight of these trivial living quarters compared to the intricate ornateness of the central altar and the cyclopean carving on the face of the cliff showed Poggioli how far away was the spirit of negro life from the conventional personal acquisitiveness of the white American and European civilization. To carve a strange vast face on a cliff—and live in a palm scarf hut!

IN HIS gradually increasing anxiety about the governor, Poggioli looked around to see if there was not some person whom he could overtake unobtrusively and glean some information as to Boisrond's whereabouts. He looked around and saw a wrinkled old negress gathering some sticks for her early morning fire. The American went toward her and overtook her easily enough although she did attempt to get away from him with the tremulous ineffective haste of age. When he caught her up she was breathless and perhaps angry at the chase.

"Granddam," said the white man walking along at her side, "where in this place do they keep the recruits who have just arrived?"

The old woman looked at Poggioli with half frightened, half cunning black eyes.

"M'sieu," she croaked in her blurred creole, "you came in with them, did you not?"

"I know it," admitted Poggioli in a worried voice, "but I've lost sight of them."

The old creature wrinkled up her face in grotesque interrogation.

"You don't know where they are?"

The stress on the you was clearly reminiscent of Poggioli's satanic commission.

"I wish I did, Granddam," replied the psychologist in simple distress. "I had a special friend—"

He broke off, fearful of saying too much.

The old grimalkin seemed to get over her fear of the white man, and gave a grimace of mirth—

"If you can't keep track of a friend, m'sieu, how do you hope to trail down a Papa Loi?"

"I am not so much interested in Papa Lois now as I am in my friend."

The old creature relented somewhat at his distress. She peered inquisitively into his face.

"Your friend is a big man?" she divined.

"Yes, Granddam."

"With an ugly face?"

"Yes."

She nodded wisely, still staring into Poggioli's eyes.

"I see he is a great person somewhere, some other place than here in Canaan."

Such a name as "Canaan" for a camp of outlaws sent its flicker of amusement across Poggioli's mind, but the next instant he was uneasy at the old witch's close guesses.

"I am not asking who he is. I am asking where he is, what is happening to him!"

The old hag gave her malicious cackle again as she scrutinized him.

"The devil does very little for you, m'sieu. You must be a step-child."

"Tell me where is this man!" said Poggioli.

The old creature placed claw-like fingers to her mouth; her ugly face took on a rapt look. After a moment she said:

"I see the big man, m'sieu, sitting in an old chair. The Papa Loi is speaking to him The big man struggles. His heart rages like a great fire. He can do nothing. Look, he flings the guards about! He is like a great drunk bear! Now, ehue! Your

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huge friend wears flowers of guilt on his head! They bloom like red roses!"

She broke into an eerie cachinnation, turned and went hurrying away with her bundle of sticks hugged to her skinny breast.

Poggioli sprang after her and caught her roughly by the shoulder.

"But where is he?" he cried. "You didn't tell me where he is?"

The old woman squirmed under his clutch and pointed angrily.

"Yonder is one of your friends in that *yagua!*" she squealed wrathfully. "Go, and may the devil take you!"

The professor of psychology turned and went legging it up the long slope of the bowl from the only hint of any uncanny psychology he had received since his arrival in Haiti.

The old woman's hint that Boisrond was undergoing some sort of violence filled the American with foreboding. As he ran to the *yagua* he thought what he would do. He meant to rush into the hut and attack the devil doctor with his bare hands; but the folly of such a course came to him long before he reached the *yagua*. He would argue the matter, upbraid them, threaten them with a return of the American marines. With this on the tip of his tongue he sprinted up to the entrance and dashed inside.

The place was empty. The psychologist had a momentary impression that the struggle had been real, that it had been spirited away in the twinkling of an eye by the infernal powers of the Papa Loi. Reverberations of the conflict seemed still quivering in the *yagua*.

It was a most fantastic impression to fall over a man in a simple hut in the clear light of dawn. Poggioli stood trembling and staring at a great mahogany four poster which was the solitary piece of furniture the hut contained. It was the one necessary article which every West Indian negro must have to start housekeeping—a rich, marvellously-carved mahogany four poster. Then, sprawled out on this bed, the psychologist saw a negro lying in a deep sleep. He was a rather smallish negro in dirty khaki, and his Krag, taken from the *rurales*, sat in the corner. Poggioli stood looking at this smallish black, and presently recognized him as one of the negroes who had come with him to Canaan, if that were the name of this place, earlier that morning. Apparently the fellow was sleeping off the weariness of his night's exertions.

Poggioli seized on his erstwhile companion and shook him.

"Boy," he cried, "wake up. Where is Governor Boisrond?"

The negro groaned and opened glazed eyes.

"In Cap Haitien," he mumbled and closed his eyes again.

"I mean where is the big fellow who came with us this morning?"

"Don't know—he came—behind me."

There seemed no arousing the fellow from his lethargy.

"Where is Jean LaFronde, the Papa Loi?"

"In this *yagua*. Asked if I was a true *caco*. Certainly m'sieu, I am a true *caco*. I cut my wife's throat before I left home."

He drew a deep groaning breath and dropped into his heavy stupor again.

THIS dulled mention of murder shocked Poggioli, but beyond that, it held still more dismaying suggestions. It recalled to the American the drug label he had picked up on the voodoo altar, and it suggested the sort of drug used. Poggioli fumbled in his pocket after the little band, found it and hurried to the door of the hut for light. He readily found the manufacturer's signature, then still searching, he saw the label in pale blue letters which had been rubber stamped on the band. In his previous search the pale blue light of morning had disguised the imprint perfectly. But in this increased and ruddier light he read the name easily—

SCOPOTHALAMIN.

As he stared a sudden flood of illumination broke over Poggioli. He knew well enough the peculiar psychical action of this newly discovered drug. It destroyed all sense of caution and concealment. The negro on the bed evidently had been heavily doped with it. It had left him with the whole contents of his memory open to any one who cared to question him. So this was the stuff the voodoo priest used on recruits to test their fidelity to the *caco* cause. The sharp modernity of the method was what amazed Poggioli. He had not been prepared for the very latest products of a

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synthetic chemical laboratory in the Haitian brush. No wonder there was an unaccountable gap in the narrative of each prisoner whom he had interviewed in LaFerrière. No wonder LaFronde reached certitudes with an uncanny precision. The new drug, the "truth" drug—

At that moment, Poggioli suddenly realized that somewhere Governor Boisrond was in the hands of his enemies, a victim of this revealing drug.

Poggioli stepped out of the hut with a tightening in his throat. He looked up and down the *yaguas*. They were irregularly spaced around the arc of the bowl in clumps of palm trees with which the great arena was decorated. In some one of these huts, Poggioli did not doubt the black giant was being probed and probably mutilated, as were the victims in LaFerrière.

A last flash of anger that Boisrond should ever have risked himself in such a place, then Poggioli started at a trot around the whole immense circle of the bowl. As he went, he was wretchedly certain that he was taking the longest arc to reach the hut where Boisrond lay. No matter which way he went, it would turn out to be the longer route. He would threaten them with the American marines! He would see to a report in Washington! Such savagery!

This mental upbraiding was broken into by a frantic outburst of barking by some distant dog. The sound came from the direction of the coffee bushes where he and the governor had entered the bowl early that morning. He paused a moment to peer in that direction. The distance was too great to see the dog, but as he stared a queer thing happened. A squad of *cacos* in that sector of the bowl suddenly came flying toward the central altar as if the devil himself were after them. This devil, apparently, was the dog. For such a puny foe to rout a number of men armed with machetes was grotesque. Poggioli stared more curiously when out of the screen of coffee bushes broke the hard tearing crash of army rifles. At the volley four or five of the flying *cacos* pitched forward, and one who was hit but not killed scrambled along down the slope on all fours.

This amazing and opportune rifle fire cleared the air for Poggioli like a thunder crash. A sudden glorious exhilaration filled him. He turned and went running toward the coffee fringe shouting—

"The *rurales!* The *rurales!*"

At the same moment enormous confusion developed in the *caco* camp. Men came running out of the huts all around the circle with antiquated arms in their hands. Then Poggioli saw a line of khaki-clad *rurales* dash down the rim of the bowl with bayonets shining in the morning light. He saw them kneel and fire into the swarming *cacos*. Came the whine of bullets in the air. Every shot seemed to pass within a foot of Poggioli's ear. One slapped a palm some ten yards from him. The American thought quickly what to do. He felt sure he would be hit no matter which way he ran.

At that instant his mind was switched from his personal peril by a huge black figure lunging out of one of the *yagua* huts just ahead of him and roaring out:

"Charge, my *rurales!* Let them have it!"

Then even amid the steady crashing of the rifles, Poggioli heard the frantic yipping of a dog. He saw a mongrel hound come dashing along the long arc of palms toward the huge feeling negro. Even in the excitement of the moment, Poggioli saw that the governor's great gargoyle face had scarlet patches for the ears and nose.

The battle between the *rurales* and the *cacos* swiftly grew to such confusion that Poggioli caught but flashes of it. He himself was running like a jumping jack toward the *rurale* lines howling, "American! American!" at every leap.

He saw the *rurales* spread out in front of him fanwise and drop on their bellies in the grass, after the tactics of the American marines. Their rifle shots sounded like a steady hammering and looked like a continuous spouting of vapor, which puffed up and drifted leisurely across their sector of the bowl. Every bullet droned past Poggioli's ears as he sprinted toward the *rurale* lines in an interminable run and at last got safely behind those deadly vaporing puffs. When he was fifty yards to the rear he turned and watched the conflict.

THE *cacos* were in a jumbled mass behind the central altar from which they expected miraculous protection. Their ancient guns belched out a pall of black smoke. Echoes of their rifles stuttered back from the great sinister face on the cliff. In front of Poggioli the marine-trained *rurales* lay spread

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out, firing into the devil worshippers with a sort of savage efficiency. The tearing sound of the riflery seemed to go on forever. Poggioli's feeling of personal danger vanished completely and the whole scene became a sort of drama. In the scrambling *caco* masses, individuals would topple out, crumple up.

In the uproar he could hear fragments of their shouts, oaths, their prayers to Papa Loi. Now and then one of the *rurales* near the white man would collapse and cease firing. Once a *caco* bullet flicked a hole in the white man's coat. Poggioli stepped aside to let it pass and continued his entranced staring at the fight.

Presently the fire of the *cacos* began to weaken. What was happening in the center of the bowl, who was dead, who alive, Poggioli could not make out. He was lying prone on the ground just behind the regular troops. Now at this slacking of the *caco* fire a heady feeling of triumph seized him. He scrambled to his feet to run forward, when suddenly out of the black gun smoke about the altar, charged a long line of negroes brandishing machetes. At the head of the column came the fantastic figure of the devil's mask.

The hammering of the Krags grew heavier. Some of the charging *cacos* dropped out, but the greater part came on. They began shouting and waving their heavy blades. They galoped up the slope at menacing speed. Poggioli could see their contorted faces, bare feet, the swell of up-lifted biceps. They grew swiftly larger, clearer.

In the van of the charging column came the weird figure of the priest in the devil's mask, brandishing a machete and leading his *cacos* into the very muzzles of the guns. A dozen rifles fired at him. The wizard seemed indeed to brush aside the bullets. Even Poggioli felt the glamor of the uncanny about him.

When the macheteers were right in the midst of the soldiers, the crashing of the rifles abruptly ceased. The *rurales* leaped up with fixed bayonets. A shocking silence swept over the bowl as the plantation negroes, swinging sugar knives, clashed with other plantation negroes wielding Krags. The whole field around Poggioli was filled with swift duels, a thrust, a stroke. Now and then a hurried shot muffled against the very body of a man. This and the hard gasping breaths of the fighting men. The headachy smell of smokeless powder and the repulsive odor of desperately wounded men filled the air.

In the midst of this struggle the priest in the mask lunged, cut and parried with the address of a finished duelist. He became the axis of the fight. A zone of miraculous safety spread around him. Poggioli saw one of the *rurales* level his Krag straight at the menacing figure; the weapon failed fire or was empty.

The negro flung down his gun with a despairing shout, turned and dashed for the cover of the coffee thicket. Two or three men followed. The alarm spread. The *rurales* teetered on the verge of a rout. Then an ursine roar from the rear fetched up the fugitives. The next moment, swinging a Krag by its muzzle, the gigantic black form of the governor charged toward the devil doctor.

Boisrond plunged forward, wading shoulder deep amongst the duelists. Machetes sheared at him; the wavering bayonets solidified around him. The next moment the giant clashed with the grotesque devil's mask.

Poggioli glimpsed the mask make a swift cut with the sugar knife; Boisrond crashed down an immense sweeping two-handed stroke with a clubbed Krag. The mask disappeared. Rose shouts, howls; men crushed together like an enormous steel-tipped football scrimmage. In two or three minutes the murderous equipoise untangled. The combatants flowed rapidly back toward the center of the bowl; the machetes shrieking in front, the Krags on their heels, howling and cursing and thrusting.

Then rifle shots began again. They multiplied as the *rurales* stopped trying to bayonet and fell to loading and firing. Again there was a brief resistance behind the sinister altar in the center of the field; but the *rurales* spread out like workmen and began a converging fire that sent the *cacos* flying aimlessly toward the rim if they were not shot before they reached the brush.

Poggioli watched the clean-up with singing nerves. Every living thing in the bowl was hunted out by the *rurales*. When the massacre swept into the further sector of the bowl, the white man could not make out the details, but an occasional shot, the scream of a woman, the shriek of a child told its terror. Some of the refugees the

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soldiers picked out of the palms, some behind stones, others in the *yagua* huts. Now and then some wretch leaped out of a covert and became a moving target for the triumphant *rurales*. The finish was carried out with an unmerciful thoroughness characteristic of warfare in the Haitian brush.

When the last shot was fired, the soldiers spent about an hour looting the bodies and the huts, but the voodoo altar in the center of the bowl they left untouched and also the figure of the devil's mask up near the fringe of the coffee bushes. Its carved face was curiously mashed so that it wore a certain sardonic leer as it lay at the furthest point the *cacos* had won during the battle. Around it were ranked windrows of machetes and bodies.

While the *rurales* were gathering their spoil, Poggioli walked around to the *yagua* he had entered and found the negro deserter slumped over the footboard of the mahogany bed. Some *rurale* had seen him when he attempted to get out of the four poster.

From the door of the *yagua* the psychologist looked across the charnel bowl and saw the great unfinished face on the cliff. It gazed down with its somber brooding mystery on the dead bodies of these strange black men who spent their strength in carving it. And it struck Poggioli as he looked at it that the profound reason why these carvers lay scattered before their handiwork was precisely because their passion lay in creating this great somber face, and not in producing sugar cane on flat plantations.

That was the crime for which the European civilization of the world had no forgiveness. The spirit of these dead negroes had been far more revolutionary than that of the Russian reds. For the reds wanted only to rearrange the distribution of food and clothes, but these black men had transposed the whole ictus of human life. The stress had been shifted from belly to emotion; so their carving had been stopped and their black corpses sown to the rising heat of the sun.

ON THE march back to Cap Haitien, Governor Boisrond walked beside Poggioli, looking scarcely more grotesque now than before he lost his nose and ears. His wounds gave his rumble a certain nasal sound as if from a severe coryza. He carried in his arms the body of his hound which a stray shot had killed. He was getting it back to Cap Haitien, he said, to bury it.

"I knew if I could ever march into the *caco* camp barefooted," he explained in his ponderous, stopped voice, "my hound would follow me and lead my men to me."

The sun was overhead now and the dewy jungle was a hot, wet blanket. A chilly shiver went through Poggioli.

"So that's why you came here with me?" he asked dully.

"That is why I cabled you from Curaçao."

Poggioli stumbled on down the choked slopes of the mountain in silence. There were details in the black giant's tortuous plans which the white man did not fathom, but the larger outlines were clear enough.

The giant rumbled on meditatively.

"I knew he could not resist the coup of this"—the governor indicated his nose and ears—"but he did not take into account this." He moved the dead dog which he carried carefully in his arms.

When they reached the American-built highway, Poggioli found the governor's brougham awaiting them, all evidently arranged according to the executive's schedule. As the two men drove back to Cap Haitien, Poggioli shivered again painfully in the heat.

"*Paludismo*," rumbled the governor.

"I must see Vauquière," shivered the psychologist.

There was a pause, then Boisrond rumbled—

"When you see Madame Vauquière again, M'sieu Poggioli, you must be sure to tell her that her husband died like a hero at the head of his men."

For a moment Poggioli was shocked out of his malaise.

"Vauquière—dead?"

The grotesque giant held up a warning hand.

"Softer, m'sieu. Nobody knows it but us. Let us spread the report and some of my *rurales* will remember they saw him fighting at the head of our ranks. Then others will recall the same thing, and finally it will become a truth no man can deny, for all my soldiers were afraid to touch the mask of the dead voodoo priest in Canaan."

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THREE days later, Poggioli was at sea on the French steamer, *Talleyrand*, and was sitting in a steamer chair musing to himself with an occasional remark to Osterwasski, who chanced to occupy the adjoining seat. The glimmering mountains of Haiti had sunk into the sea.

The psychologist was chewing somewhat astringently upon his recent adventures in the island. His own rôle in the tragedy was still a little obscure to him. He sat meditating upon what had happened. He saw clearly enough that both Vauquière and Boisrond had wanted him to come to Cap Haitien to conduct the investigation. Evidently the physician had hoped to gain wide publicity and many new recruits by Poggioli's visit to his camp. Or he may have hoped that Poggioli's reports would bring about an American influence which would force a change of governors, then he, Vauquière, would probably have stepped into the executive mansion and would instantly have quelled the power of Jean LaFronde.

The psychologist did not doubt now that it was Vauquière himself who had made the mock attack upon him on the terrace of the governor's mansion in an effort to bolster up the fictitious personality of the *caco* chief.

The type of government the retired actor proposed to establish in Cap Haitien was clear enough, a tyranny after the model of the old Haitien emperor, Henri Christophe, but an artistic tyranny. That was a queer idea in an era of undiluted commercialism.

As Poggioli sat staring out at sea, the fact occurred to him that all the great flowerings of art which history records came to bloom under an artistic tyrant—the French Henris, the Italian Medicis, the Greek Pericles, and even the English Elizabeth.

It was an odd fact, he had never thought of it before. Perhaps under a little kindlier star, Vauquière might have developed that weird mysterious beauty that lies in the heart of the Children of the Sun.

Boisrond's rôle was much simpler. He had wanted some reasonable excuse for walking barefooted in Canaan, and to escort Poggioli there was the simplest device. Had he attempted to enter on his own initiative, the *cacos* immediately would have suspected some ruse, and no one would have guided him through the labyrinth of the jungle.

Vauquière had known the governor was coming to his camp. The governor knew that Vauquière knew, but the physician did not think of the dog, and so Canaan fell. That was the final and exquisite note of irony, that the actor's dream and the development of a people should fall through the nose of a cur.

The psychologist turned to his companion and continued his musing aloud:

"The future may bring a day, Osterwasski, when some enormously advanced civilization will welcome any alien race, because a different race means a different culture and a different mode of looking at life. That is a precious thing, Osterwasski, I should say, the most precious thing, because when man advances beyond a primitive concern about clothes for his back and food for his belly, the chief occupation and delight of man is the contemplation of life. It embraces religion, philosophy, metaphysics and every good and great thing. The day may come, Osterwasski, when it is conceivable that all races will cherish, and not war against other races for their intellectual and spiritual novelties."

Osterwasski looked around curiously at his companion.

"But that day is remote, Osterwasski, and possibly, may never come. It is quite conceivable by the time that far off era arrives, the mind of the whole world will be thoroughly caucasianized. Then every man will devote every second of every day to the production of food. Nobody will know what to do with it; nobody will ever ask. It will be a tenet universally held that food should be produced, not used, and garments made, not worn."

"What are you talking about?" asked Osterwasski regarding his companion suspiciously. "You ought to try to sleep all you can. You've been under a strain."

Poggioli hushed.

Somewhat later, the ship's printer came on deck with his daily gist of news caught over the radio. The psychologist bought one of the little handsheets for ten centimes. He glanced through the typewritten digest of the world's doings. In it he found this item:

Owing to recent *caco* outbreaks in the department of Cap Haitien, the Federal authorities in Port au Prince have requested the resignation of Governor Boisrond and have appointed in his stead, M. Jean Baptiste LaFayette Napoleon LeClerc, formerly assistant collector of customs in the port of Cap Haitien.

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CORN

by Tiswoode Tarleton

HAL WILEY slides off his mule's back in front of "Pap" Andrew's store. The ridge boys stop pitching horseshoes in the pasture across from the store. They look at Hal and start whispering among themselves. The sun is hitting the ridge-top and shines in the faces of those in the pasture, now holding their horseshoes. The sun shines in the open mouth of Bob Tuppin, who laughs while Hal Wiley ties his mule to the hitching post.

As he goes into Pap Andrew's store the low mumbling of voices from the pasture seems to hit Hal's back like pebbles flung at him. Little hard words come across the road now, and into the store. Gossip words, Hal thinks, like women folks like to fling. Men away from their corn fields, mountain men most out of their pants, pitching horseshoes and gossiping. Horseshoes at a nickel a game, and no sugar or white flour at home.

Hal sits down on the counter of Pap Andrew's store. Pap looks up over his specs from a catalog and crosses his legs in his chair and says—

"Hit's good corn weather, Hal."

"Shore is. Good borer weather, too, ef yuh don' git ahead o' em."

Hal takes a package of "Five Brothers" tobacco from the shelf back of him and puts ten cents in Pap's hand.

"Seen anythin' o' my ars'nate o' lead yit?"

"Gol no! I hain't, Hal. Hit's time hit comes. Yuh see tha road's been bad, 'specially tha swamp road a-leadin' tuh Leeston. Tha drayman from thar got stuck last week. Shore's tough. I'm a-gettin' out o' everythin'."

"I got lead yit but I allus look ahead. I calc'late—"

The ridge boys shuffle into the store and sit on the counter across from Hal. They order pop and suck it through straws. Ned Ferris lays a four-bit piece on the counter and turns his head so Hal won't see the wink he throws Bob Tuppin. Then Ned Ferris turns around again to Hal.

"How's tha corn?"

"Hit's a-comin' along fine, Ned. How's yourn?"

"Hit's mighty po'. Cain't seem tuh git along on my place."

"Borers?" asked Hal.

"Borers an' rocks. I reckon the lan's jest po'."

"Likely hit needs fertilizin' an' tha lan' needs tuh be clean o' stones," says Hal. "Hit's tough work a-luggin off stones, but I got 'nuff offen my place tuh build me a shack an' some left over fer a barn. Hit's worth the work; cause you git a fireproof house offen hit an' yuh kin grow better corn. Lordsy, thar's a heap o' things tuh larn 'bout corn. Fer one thing, yuh got tuh feed tha lan' else yuh cain't expec' much from hit any more'n yuh kin from folks that's starved."

"Maybe so," says Ned Ferris.

Bob Tuppin is talking to Ned with his eyes and Ned Ferris turns around once more and looks at Hal Wiley.

"Git Pap to git yuh some o' that Chicago fertilizer an' feed yore groun'," says Hal Wiley.

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"Guess thar's too many borers in my corn." Ned Ferris winks at Bob Tuppin.

"Pap'll git yuh some ars'nate o' lead," says Hal. "Hit'll fix tha borers, ef yuh spray reg'lar. Too late fer this crop, though, cause tha borers has done thar work. I hain't got nary a borer in my corn cause I sprayed from tha beginnin' an' I'm still a-sprayin'. Whar's yore las' year's stalks, Ned? Burn 'em up?"

"No I hain't burned 'em up. Old stalks down in the holler, rotted by now," Ned Ferris says.

"But the borers in 'em hain't rotted. Them same borers from las' year has done had thousands o' young 'uns. Borers don't mind cold, neither; they jest go tuh sleep same as a b'ar does, an' the followin' spring fly out as moths an' lay thar eggs in tha young corn stalks; not only in yourn but all tha folk's corn 'roun' these hills. Better burn 'em up next time, Ned."

"Thar hain't no charge fer that lecture, folks," says Bob Tuppin, "ef it is a long un. All thar is 'bout corn raisin' kin be spoke in four letters, l-u-c-k. Better save yore breath, Ned."

The words from Bob Tuppin's mouth rest on Hal Wiley's shoulder like chips. Hal fills his pipe and looks out the door of Pap Andrew's store.

"Call hit what yuh like," he says. "Hit hain't my funeral what other folks does with thar corn. Ned was jest a-gettin' an answer tuh his questions."

The Tuppin boys and Ned Ferris are smiling back and forth, grim smiles that make Pap Andrews move nervously in his chair and shake his head at Bob, the biggest Tuppin boy. Two ridge women see who it is sitting across from each other on the counters as they come into the store, see it's a Wiley and two Tuppins, and back out.

Hal Wiley gets up from the counter and moves over to the open door.

"Ef yuh happen tuh see yore cousin, jest tell him tuh keep offen our lan'," Bob Tuppins says.

"I hain't my cousin's keeper," answers Hal Wiley. "Ef he gits on yore lan' I reckon yuh kin shoo him off. Hit's all I kin do tuh look arter my own business. I hain't a-goin' on yore land."

Hal Wiley steps out to his mule, unties him and climbs on his back while talk from Pap's store buzzes about his ears like bees. Loud laughs follow Hal as he rides down the ridge road. —— fools, he thinks. If folks 'd keep busy, there wouldn't be time for trouble. Folks too shiftless in these hills. What for cousin Ted doesn't stop at home and keep off the Tuppin land? And if the Tuppin boys did anything to cousin Ted, why doesn't he go to court? If folks took to raising better hogs or corn the way the men from the farm school shows 'em they'd be too busy to feud.

Chicadees fly from bush to bush along side the ridge road, keeping up to Hal and his mule. The sun is hot on the ridge-top, and Hal turns the mule into the timber, on to a path hammered down through the scrub. After a while the mule comes out of the timber close to Hal's stone cabin that looks down the ridge slope to the valley. The mule goes his own way to the shed as Hal slides off at his cabin door.

The corn is rustling beyond Hal's cabin. White unripened tassels move in the wind, cool wind coming from the mountains across the valley and the little ridge. Hal takes his hoe from the side of his cabin and goes over to the corn. The earth turns black in the corn-hills after his hoe. The sun is overhead; and on Hal's back, but the cool mountain wind is blowing through the corn.

THE sun is behind the mountains somewhere and the haze and fog are rising from the hollows at the foot of the big ridge slope. Fog creeps up the slope pulling a sheet over the valley. Hal takes his hoe into the shed and throws some hay into the mule's manger. He stands still suddenly as two rifle shots come from the little ridge across the valley. Dull roar of black powder, black powder made before the Civil war, Hal thinks. Most likely old fifty caliber Winchester like Cousin Ted's.

Several more reports come, but cracks now, instead of roars.

"Mausers," Hal says to himself. "Must be Tuppin's Mausers answering Ted's Winchester. Nobody else's got Mausers in these parts but the Tuppins and myself, that I know about."

The mule's teeth are grinding on the hay and Hal takes a hold of his nose.

"Lissen," he says.

The Mausers speak fast three or four times. The Winchester doesn't speak. Neither the Mausers nor the Winchester

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speak again and Hal lets the mule go on eating his hay.

Hal leaves the shed for his stoop. The big ridge, the little ridge and the valley in between are now quiet. Since the shooting, night birds are silent and the bullfrogs in the hollows say nothing. Dusk is on the ridge-top, and fog is climbing higher; only Hal's white stone cabin shows plain in the coming night.

Hal stretches and goes into his cabin, and lies down on his cot. Mausers had last word, he thinks. Winchester didn't seem to answer. Old big bore Winchester's got no show with a Mauser unless it's close up.

"Huh!"

Something seems to be dragging over the ground outside Hal's cabin. A faint scraping along the ground now near the cabin door. A voice speaks, "Hal." Faint voice like a hoarse whisper.

Hal gets up and goes over to the door.

"Who's thar?" he asks.

"Hit's Ted." Husky whisper says it, "Godamighty, help!"

Hal feels around for Ted in the blackness and finds him lying on the ground near the stoop.

"Let me git my arms under yuh, Ted. Thassit."

Ted's body is long and heavy in Hal's arms. Ted's right pant leg feels sticky to Hal's hand as he carries him in the cabin and lays him on the cot.

The yellow flame of the lamp splashes Ted's face when Hal lights it. Ted's face is white underneath his red whiskers, and his overalls-pants are all stained up.

"In the right leg, Ted?" asked Hal.

"Right thar," he answers and points above his right knee.

Ted winces when Hal tries to take off his pants and Hal gives him a drink of yellow whisky from a jug before he washes the wound. The wound is a hole in the muscle above the knee.

"Bullet went clean through," says Hal. "Steel-jacket bullet, must be. Yore in luck hit didn't strike tha bone."

"Them Tuppin boys had longer reachin' guns," Ted says.

"Course they has longer reachin' guns. Didn't yuh know hit?"

"Shore, I knowed hit."

"What fer yuh start feudin' with tha Tuppins agin' then?"

"Cause the Tuppins shot my bes' bitch houn' an' she's got puppies."

"Yuh shore tha Tuppins did hit?" Hal asked.

"Course I'm shore. One o' the valley gals tole me; she was a-berryin' this mawnin' and seen 'em do hit. Hit's up tuh you, Hal. Yuh cain't set still an' see all yore kin done in, kin yuh? Nex' thing the Tuppins'll be a-pluggin' my pap. Them boys cain't shoot a-tall alongside yuh. An' yuh got a Mauser. Wished I'd borrowed hit this evenin'."

"Since Ole Man True got tuh be jedge at Leeston folks kin git a fair co't hearin'," says Hal. "Ef hit was my bitch tha Tuppins shot I'd make 'em pay fer tha damage. An' ef they kill any kin o' mine they'll shore be tried fer murder. Co't at Leeston hain't like hit used tuh be. Jedge True said ef his own son done anybody in he'd swing fer hit."

"Fool talk that is," says Ted. "Who's a-goin' tuh arrest tha Tuppins boys and bring 'em to co't? I s'pose yore thinkin' o' tha sheriff. Huh."

"Wal, thar's a-plenty ways o' gettin' the Tuppins ef Jedge True an' tha circuit attorney wants 'em."

"An' what ef they does git tha Tuppins in co't," answers Ted. "They got tuh be tried by a jury, an' a jury hain't all a-goin' tuh be picked from Leeston. Tha Tuppins lawyer'll see tuh hit. Jedge True hain't the jury an' some o' the jury is a-goin' tuh think o' thar own skin. The Tuppins' kin's thick as fleas on a dog in this country, an' they stan' by one another. Hit's more'n I kin say fer some o' the Wileys."

"Yore jest excitin' yoreself an' hit's bad fer yore leg, Ted. See ef yuh cain't go tuh sleep."

Hal blows out the lamp and lies down on the floor. Sleep doesn't come to Hal. Ideas come crowding one another. Day dreams crowd till the damp air coming in the door grips his legs. He gets up quietly and goes over to close the cabin door.

The corn rustles, but there's no wind. Hal steps down on his stoop. No wind yet, no wind anywhere in the open. The air is still. Then why does the corn rustle beyond the cabin? When Hal steps forward again in the blackness his foot strikes a stone. Faint footfalls come to him from the cornfield, then in a minute stones start rolling down the big ridge slope.

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He gets his lantern from the shed. The mule stirs and blinks when Hal lights it. The flame of the lantern is a yellow blotch on the pitch of the night as Hal goes over to the corn. Corn doesn't rustle except from Hal brushing it with his shoulder as he goes down the first row. The flame of the lantern is like a big glow-worm in the fog, now hovering over the corn, now dropping to the furrow between the stalks.

Over in the third row there are heel marks in the furrow, heel marks between the hills. Mountain men's boot heels stamped in the furrow. The white unripened tassels on the corn don't look right, corn droops too much along the row. Down under the tassel of an ear Hal finds a borer. Borer twists and turns in the yellow light. Borer's already started its tunnel in the corn. Borer almost the color of the silk. Hal kills the borer with his jack-knife and stamps it into the ground.

All along the third row borers are in the corn and mountain men's boot heel marks in the furrow. Fourth row, too.

THE black blanket of night is fading when Hal leaves the corn-field, blows out the lantern and goes to his cabin. His cousin Ted stirs in the cot.

"That Hal?"

"Hit's me. Go tuh sleep ef yuh kin an' keep quiet."

The night isn't fading much in the cabin yet. Hal feels for his Mauser on the wall and creeps out of the cabin.

A lone star twinkles overhead as the haze and fog begin to lower to the valley. Hal creeps along under the night blanket and lets himself down the slope, feeling for stones at every step. Down in the swamp at the foot of the slope he draws his feet out of the mud slowly so water doesn't rush in with a suck.

His feet feel stones once more at the bottom of the little ridge slope. The blanket of night is lifting all the time and it is light enough to see as he reaches the little ridge top.

Nothing on the white road on the little ridge-top and he crawls across it on his belly to the brush on the other side. As he lies in the brush the night blanket lifts until he can see the cabin of the Tuppins at the beginning of the clearing about a hundred yards away. Hal can see the Tuppin woodyard and the Tuppin corn on the ridge-side to his left. Stunted corn, blighted corn. Tuppin's corn's full of borers. Last year's corn-stalks scattered over the ridge-side.

Smoke is coming from the Tuppin's chimney, Tuppin's chimney that is falling apart. Hal sits back in the brush with Mauser rifle lying between his legs. Hal's hand throws the bolt back slowly and watches the Tuppin boys' cabin door.

Pretty soon Sid, the smallest Tuppin, sticks his head out the door, scans the ridge-side and draws his head in again. Hal rests the barrel of the Mauser in his left hand and rests his left hand on his knee. Mauser barrel is pointing through a little opening in the brush in front of Hal.

Tuppin boys know there's something wrong, thinks Hal. Hill men got sharp hunch for danger. Isn't seeing, or hearing, or smelling; must be instinct, just like a dog has. Maybe they just feel trouble ahead in their bones. Tuppin boys know there's trouble ahead and don't know what to do, don't know where the trouble is.

Hal does his watching now through the Mauser's peep-sight. The peep-sight is framing the cabin door. Smoke isn't coming out of the Tuppin chimney now. Tuppins got to get out for more wood, thinks Hal. Plain as day they don't have any breakfast till they do.

Hal is a hill man. He's got a hunch, too. Something's telling his bones that Bob, the biggest Tuppin boy, is standing back in the dark of the cabin with his rifle pointing out the cabin window. Bob Tuppin's ready if he sees anything on the ridge-side or if his brother draws anybody's fire.

Sid Tuppin comes to the door again, sticks his head out farther this time and sweeps the ridge-side with his eyes. Sid Tuppin steps down on the stoop, steps into the circle of the Mauser's peep sight and Hal fires. Hal throws his own body two feet over in the scrub to his right when he fires, and Bob Tuppin's bullet clips off branches of the scrub from where Hal fired.

Sid Tuppin's body lies face down, half inside the cabin door and half on the stoop. Bob Tuppin won't come near the door and he won't stand back beyond the window, reason tells Hal. Bob Tuppin'll wait till it's dark. Huh! Bob Tuppin's belly'll fret him some before night comes. The sun's just rising over yonder between the hills now.

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Noise is coming from the cabin, digging noise, *tap-tap*. Pick or ax or something is making a hole under the other side of the cabin, a hole for Bob Tuppin to crawl through. Timber's close to the other side of the cabin, and beyond the timber, Tuppin's hives of kin.

Tap-tap-tap.

Hal crawls down through the brush to the edge of the clearing on his belly. Digging still comes. *Tap-tap.*

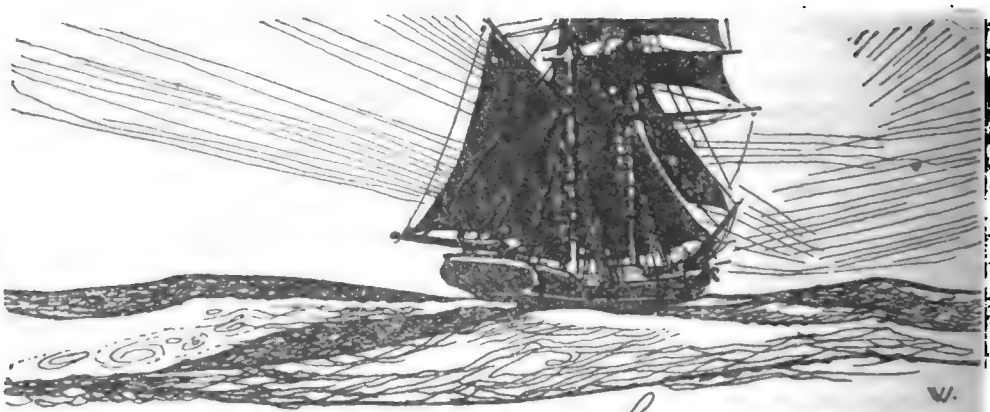
He advances twenty feet in the open on tip-toe. Taps still come and he reaches the cabin, making himself flat against the cabin wall. He steps around the corner of the cabin and when the taps come again he moves over almost to the open doorway by the body of Sid Tuppin. Can't be but one movement more for Hal. He knows that. Knows he's got to fire the second he steps in front of the open door. Can't aim much, either—got to be a snap shot.

Mauser rifle is held vertically, close to Hal's body. When the *tap-tap* comes again he steps over in front of the doorway, drops the muzzle on a line with Bob Tuppin who is digging in the hole, and fires. The Mauser's bolt throws back in Hal's hand, but Bob Tuppin doesn't move.

Mountain wind is blowing some. The corn rustles on the ridge-side beyond the Tuppin cabin. Blighted, stunted, wormy corn.

"Goshamighty, hit's a crime!"

Hal turns his back on the Tuppin bodies and leans his Mauser against the cabin door. He gathers up the dry last year's cornstalks into a pile and lights it. When the fire gets going good he begins pulling up the new corn stalks and throws them on. No more Tuppin borers pretty soon to be eating of other folk's corn.



THE STEWARD

by Captain Dingle

Author of "Kelp," "The Knell of the Horn," etc.

THE steward opened the galley stove and thrust two sticks of mahogany into the fire. He was a withered little man, and the red glare of the bright wood fire touched every wrinkle in his pale face and put color into it. He was not only steward; he was cook also, and, on occasions, body servant to Captain Post. Perhaps there was reason for his pallor and his dried-apple face.

There was warmth in the galley, as there should be where mahogany is the fuel. It was not cold on deck. But the brig *Tropic*, from West Africa, was just entering temperate seas, and the blood of the crew was thin. Two sailors dodged inside the galley, shivering.

"Give's a drop o' that fire, doctor!" they chattered, and spread their hands over the stove. The steward glanced aft, through the other door, as if afraid.

"Why don't you arsk th' Old Man fer warm slops?" he said. "I don't want him arter me for letting you blokes sojer in here."

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"Him? He says he ain't got no slop hest," growled one.

"Wot do he care about us, wiv his woolies, n' his grog, an'—"

"Well, you can't stop in here I got dinner o cook," said the steward, impatiently, and he sailors slouched unwillingly out.

The steward was irritable. He too felt he change in temperature. Usually he had his galley racks hung with seamen's damp socks or other gear, drying out, for he was a kindly soul. But Captain Post had been at odds with Mr. Luckett, the mate, and the atmosphere aft was not pleasant. Besides, one of life's annoyances for the steward was to be called cook or doctor by the crew. Even Captain Post called him steward. It sounded more dignified. It made the skipper feel that his brig was a more important command; it made the steward feel that his life achievements had gotten him somewhere.

Other things contrived to irritate the steward—and reasonably. The *Tropic* was a hard ship. Captain Post was a hard man. None but a hard case, or a man down to desperate necessity, would sail in the brig. Engaged in an arduous trade, life might still have been bearable aboard the *Tropic*, but Post was not a man to study others. He studied profits. He kept the food scale down to the barest legal limit, and shaded even that. There were times, often, when the brig sailed for Africa at the peak of summer heat, traded along the coast and reeking river ports during the fever season, and sailed back across the Atlantic when days were chill and fogs were gray and life meant misery to men ill-nourished and ill-clad.

This was such a voyage. Out on the coast, where the brig had loitered longer than usual for a cargo, Captain Post worked a shrewd scheme which saved him much cherished cash, and left the crew in doubt whether he was the hard case they believed him, or rather a pretty decent old sort. First, with the not unwilling coöperation of Mr. Luckett, he contrived to work out the crew in Brass River. A hint, nothing so committal as a promise, of recompense, induced Mr. Luckett to goad a sailor to strike him.

That was the culminating point of the scheme, for striking the mate was mutiny, and as such was given out. The six fore-mast hands ran from the brig the same night, fearful of hanging by the necks until dead. Then, after the brig was loaded, kindly Captain Post contrived to get word to the hiding seamen that the police of Akassa were looking for them. The *Tropic* was the only vessel then leaving the coast. Six repentant sailormen sneaked on board on a dark night and begged to be taken away. It was the steward who carried the skipper's message to them about the police, delivering it as if he had come by the news by hearsay, and not as coming from the skipper. Gladly he had performed that little service. He had known of white men left behind in places like Brass River, and no good fate ever befell them.

Captain Post kept to himself the supreme jest he had planned.

The steward was not to know that those six sailormen would be made to work their way in the brig without pay, after having already forfeited their outward wages through desertion. And Mr. Luckett, too, had his turn. That indifferent punch on the nose which he had invited, in order to help chase them ashore, was to be amply paid for homeward bound, for they dared not punch him again. When the brig sailed out of the trades and entered the cooler and moister regions nearer home, the full quality of Captain Post was evident.

"Grub's bad?" the steward would echo, meal after meal to their complaints. "That ain't my fault, mates. Wot I gets I cooks, and wot I cooks you gets. The mate don't get no better."

"Cold, are you?" the mate would echo, time after time to their grumbling. "Run the ship and lose your gear, and come to me to get warm clothes for you? Grin and bear it, me sons. Captain Post says mutineers can't be choosers."

The steward knew how well justified was the food complaint. The brig's stores were rotten, and scanty besides. But Captain Post fared well. He had a coop of fowls on the little half poop, and made the steward answerable for them. Nobody else shared the poultry. There was a sack of fresh potatoes, too, and all through the fine weather the steward picked them over with minute care, using up the specked ones before they got wholly bad. But none went in anybody's dish but the captain's. Maybe the steward knew the taste of chicken and potatoes. He was a good steward, so it was not unlikely.

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The mate knew, also. He had a grievance altogether apart from bad food and the general fiendishness of Captain Post's selfish nature. He had been censured, and threatened with the loss of his berth, because he had indulged in rum rather freely one evening ashore. And here was the skipper, not waiting for the cooler weather, but starting on the coast and carrying right on, taking his bottle a day like a bloated admiral, with never a nod or a wink for his mate. And, now that the nights were really chill, many was the watch Mr. Luckett kept that was not relieved by any means as promptly as it should be.

ALL evil things have two ends—first and last. The wind came fair and fresh on the day that the temperature first forewarned of frost. The sun went down over a horizon clean-cut as a steel armor-plate, and there was a nose-tingling tang in the air.

"Take in the royals and flying jib, Mister Luckett, and you may check in the yards all around," the skipper observed after looking around. He was due to relieve the deck then.

The *Tropic* carried but one mate, and the captain kept a watch. It was his duty to be on deck while all hands were up, whatever he chose to do afterwards. There were few hands, and the mate hauled ropes with the rest, the skipper taking the helm, usually.

"Now me sons!" bawled Mr. Luckett. "Leggo royal halliards and clew 'em up. Sooner ye trim the yards and make up the gear, sooner ye go below. Watch on deck can furl and make fast after."

The mate let go the main royal halliards as he issued the order, and two seamen manned the light clew-lines. The fore royal came down, and was clewed up, then the mate led the way to the braces.

"Come, bullies! Sing out! Beef here! Where's Rusty?"

"To th' wheel," the grumbling response came. The mate glanced angrily aft. Rusty stood there, coolly enough, when he ought to be hauling on a rope. But he stood there alone. Captain Post was not in evidence.

"Haul away!" growled Mr. Luckett, and sang out as the men fell in behind him:

"Ah-hay! Oh-hay! Bloody man-killer. Hay-ho! Hay-ah! Takin' a nip for himself. 'Nuther pull, here. Ai-ai-ai-ah! Take a turn with that."

"Blasted starvation packet, she is!" grumbled the seaman belaying the brace.

"Shut yer hatch and pick up that tawps'l brace, y' weeping mutineer," said Mr. Luckett. It was one thing for an officer to mingle a word of opinion along with his urge to work but another altogether for a seaman to express such views.

"That'll do, Mister Luckett! You may take your watch below," the skipper called out, appearing from the companionway warmly clothed and red-faced. The mate curtly bade his three men get forward, and took himself off to his own cheerless quarters. He had enjoyed a very poor meal that evening.

The salt beef was not overly good. It was a bit too mature, and the beans tasted mildewed. He knew there had been chicken and potatoes on the skipper's table, for he had smelled the aroma; and by the same token he had smelled the old rum as he passed Captain Post coming below.

At seven o'clock in the morning Captain Post came on deck and looked around. Then he counted his chickens and removed the eggs.

"Steward!" he shouted, excitedly.

He set down two eggs on the hencoop, and they rolled gently away to smash upon the deck, but he did not give the eggs a second glance. The steward thrust his head out of the galley, then hurried aft wiping his hands on his canvas apron.

"Steward, some ruffian has stolen a chicken! Who was it, you?"

"Wot 'ud anybody steal a chicken for? Where'd they cook it?" retorted the steward, irascibly. "I don't have to steal food, and there's nobody else, 'cept you, has any fire to cook chickens at. Ain't no fire in th' fo'cs'le, not even to keep the sailors frum freezin' stiff."

"Don't tell me you don't have to steal food!" yelled the skipper. "Nobody has to steal food. I supply full and plenty. That don't prevent a thief taking my chickens, though."

He glanced suspiciously at the mate, leading the wash-decks operations.

"Mister Luckett!" he bawled.

The mate looked up sullenly.

"Mister Luckett, did you leave the deck in your watch? One of my chickens is stolen."

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"Are you sayin' I stole your blamdam fowl, Cap'n Post?" screamed Mr. Luckett furiously dashing a wooden bucket on deck and shaking a fist. "Ask the men. It's them as calls your brig a starvation packet. Me eat your chickens? I'd starve first. I hope you choke on a drumstick!"

"Who's been calling my ship a starvation packet?" demanded Post, with sudden and ludicrous dignity. "Show me the man."

"I called her a starvation 'ooker, an' so she is, too!" shouted a seaman, shivering in wet and scanty clothing at the wheel. "But I didn't pinch no chicken. I 'spect the other chickens et it fer food."

Captain Post glared for a speechless moment at the overbold seaman. Then turned red, and exploded:

"Put the ruffian in irons! D'ye hear me, Mister Luckett? I see guilt in his face! Iron him and clap him into the fore-peak. Feed him biscuit and water, steward. I'll break him!"

"None too many men, all told," the mate grumbled. "Can't work the ship with two men in my watch."

"Work yourself!" snapped the skipper. "Iron him, instantly, or by the Great Squid I'll iron you for insubordination! You heard me, cook; bread and water!"

Captain Post snorted importantly and went below. The steward followed soon after with breakfast, and regarded the skipper with so accusing a look that he presently came flying on deck with a water jug close to his ears.

"Hitting the bottle again, stooard?" the mate hinted, halting at the galley after locking up the prisoner.

"Again?" echoed the steward. "No, Mister Luckett, I ain't noticed any change. That man now, as you ironed, he hadn't ought to—"

"Then you go tell the Old Man!" snapped the mate, and stalked to the after rail to wait for the skipper to relieve him.

THE fair breeze strengthened and drove the brig homeward until it was near time for the noon observation. Then it failed, and a cold mist drifted athwart the sun. Soon after noon a drizzling sleet set in, and the breeze died, and fog crept down. The sails suddenly whanged into the masts, empty of wind. Then the brig began to roll. Cold drops fell from yards and stays, decks long dried out under equatorial sunshine began to leak. The sailor's quarters took on the fresh misery of wet beds and chilly, weeping walls.

The cables, stopped up to the hook caps of the chain pipes, clanged dismally against the iron tubes like inharmonious funeral bells. On the dreary forecastle a shivering sailor pumped doleful sounds from the wheezy old foghorn. Aft, a seaman shivered at the useless helm, and a resentful mate tried vainly to draw comfort from a pipeful of damp tobacco. Still lingering in his nostrils was the aroma of rich old rum which had floated out to him at his poor dinner from the captain's cabin. But no taste of the warming spirit had accompanied or followed the smell.

Captain Post came on deck late for relief again, but the mate was beyond caring. Mr. Luckett ceased to blame whoever it was who stole that chicken. He felt quite in mood to do some stealing himself, if he could only get his hands on a bottle. Therefore, ignoring the lateness of the relief, the mate curtly repeated the course, made some brief mention regarding the last distant fog siren heard, and with a weatherly sniff at the damp air, which held the merest promise of a breeze, went to his bed. That was the only part of the ship where he could really feel warm.

The steward thumped drearily upon a bowl of salt beef and hardtack with the head of the galley hatchet, using the blade from time to time to part a rebellious bit of stringy fiber. He was exceeding his duty in making hash for the men's supper; but he had been much given to deep thought that gray day, and hash for supper was the result. The man in the forepeak had been given one misnamed meal of biscuit and mahogany tinted water.

That cold, wet, clangorous dungeon had started a shiver down the steward's spine which refused to be quieted even in the warmth of the galley. When the time came to feed the prisoner again, a steaming platter of hash went to him, and with it the man's own blanket. And when the skipper had fed fatly upon warmed-over chicken and fried potatoes, the steward carried aft the mate's supper, hiding some lusciously greasy potatoes under the hash as a peace offering.

" 'S a shame to keep that man in them

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irons, Mister Luckett," he muttered, pouring out a mugful of bitter tea.

The mate scowled. He was scooping the hash into his plate. He found the fried potatoes, and the scowl was not quite so black.

"Th' forepeak 's no place to poke a bloke into," the steward went on, pushing forward the black sugar. "He didn't steal no chicken, neither—"

"Talk to th' Old Man about that, stooard," said the mate, hurriedly. "I obey orders, same as you. You look out you don't get clapped into th' rattle, too, for swipin' the Old Man's spuds."

"A bloke can't lay down to rest down there," the steward persisted. "Chained up to that stanchion. If he wuzn't ironed, now—"

"Here. Unlock him just for the night. Give me the key after you lock him up again in th' mornin'. I don't care if he did steal a chicken," growled Mr. Luckett.

IN THE second dog-watch shivering sailors gathered in the galley, and the steward let them stay. He even piled in chunks of mahogany and kept the stove red hot. The mate was on watch, and the skipper was well out of sight. All about the brig the sea and fog blended in a smoky pall out of which breathed the faintest of airs. The brig sailed slowly forward, without a ripple of bow wash or a bubble of wake, her drenched sails sleeping, her gear tautly motionless through shrinking. Two sailors had to be out in the cold mist: the helmsman, peering into the murk for a glimpse of the leaches to steer by; and the lookout forward, whose eyes were powerless to penetrate the fog, depending upon his ears, and keeping the brig's presence known to unseen others by grinding out melancholy noises on the foghorn every minute.

"*Whooo! Whooooooh!*" Which signified that the brig carried her port tacks aboard, and that ships which sounded only one mournful blast need not worry about her, she would give them right of way. That was the theory of it, of course.

When Captain Post took the deck at eight bells for the first watch, he seemed to be in mellow mood, and for a wonder relieved promptly on the stroke of the bell. Wrapped warmly in jersey and monkey jacket, with a long oilskin coat over all, and a pilot-cloth watch cap, he smoked a good pungent cigar and wore a ruddy smirk which the mate knew very well. As Mr. Luckett went cold and wet to his room, he resolved that he would not undress. When he saw the Old Man all aglow like that, smiling, and smoking a cigar, he knew that the rum was beginning to get in its fine work.

"Better sleep with your duds on and one eye liftin', stooard," the mate called across the cabin.

"I ain't goin' to sleep, Mister Luckett," retorted the steward.

Twice that watch the steward crept on deck. Snow was falling, and the fog still clung to the water. The brig moved faster; the bubbles ran along her sides musically. The foghorn ground out its warning, and somewhere out in the murky night a sailing ship answered. It was cold up on deck.

The steward went back to his bed each time with less anxiety concerning the ship's safety. The skipper stood beside the skylight, motionless and stolid looking. The helmsman loomed in the gray darkness against the binnacle like a piece carved out of the fog. The steward was sleepy, too. Each time he passed through the cabin he heard the hearty snores of Mr. Luckett.

"Take 'nother look presently," he muttered, and fell sound asleep.

And out of a dream of security and comfort the steward was hurled from his bunk to the steeply heeling deck, with the crash of disaster in his waking ears and the terrified shouts of men. The swing lamp over the table still burned, and by its light the steward clawed his way to the companionway. Mr. Luckett stumbled out, swearing sleepily. In the narrow companionway both collided with Captain Post, scrambling upwards in panic. On the deck was darkness, and chaos, and the bitter cold.

In the crushed doorway of the companionway the three men became jammed. The brig lay over on her side, with both masts gone at the deck; and, just disappearing back into the darkness whence it had come loomed the long jib-boom and head gear of a great steel clipper. The jibs were flapping with started sheets, the powerful steel fabric wrenched the little brig's upperworks away in jagged fragments as it passed; human shouts pealed out of the gloom behind the tall ship's jibs, and were answered by shouts from beneath the jib-boom, near the water, or in it.

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"They've murdered us!" screamed Post, struggling furiously to get free. A doorpost was broken, and the angle of the break held the three men as tightly as in a trap. "Ahoy! Ship ahoy! Stand by us!"

"It's you as murdered us if 't is murder," rasped Luckett, his teeth clenched in pain and terror. "Leavin' the deck a night like this, you an' your bloody rum!"

"Aye, she's down by th' head already," muttered the steward. The sound of the ship and her voices had passed on.

Captain Post swore bitterly at his companions and at the vanished ship. He cursed everything and everybody in any way connected with the ship and her building, her lading, and her voyaging, until at length he whimpered, and almost wept. Neither he nor the mate nor the steward ceased for a moment his efforts to extricate himself from the grip of the broken companionway. And of a sudden the skipper laughed. It was an astonishing sound. Mr. Luckett and the steward muttered fearfully, trying to see his face, sure that liquor and disaster together had driven him mad.

"The brig can't sink!" he cackled. "How can she sink, loaded with lumber and oil? She's well insured, and near home, anyhow."

"Yes, so are the watch below near home!" snarled Mr. Luckett.

"Rats!" chuckled Post.

"Aye, an' so is the pore feller who you clapped into the forepeak!" said the steward.

"Thief!" growled the skipper.

"He wasn't no thief! The blinkin' chicken died o' the pip. I see it huddled up in a corner. You never give him a charnce to speak. Now he's drownded, and you killed him. I 'opes you drowns, too, 's all I 'opes."

"Liar!" snapped Post, and in the darkness soon was heard the gurgle of liquor from a bottle neck.

THE wizened little steward first squirmed free by the simple expedient of slipping out of his clothes. He was chilled through, for all his struggles. The brig rolled loggily, the cabins were full of water; it could be heard sloshing about underfoot. The main-deck was awash. He felt the trembling quiver of the laboring hull, torn between the will of water and wood. In the chicken coop the few miserable hens kept up a plaintive chirping. The galley structure still stood. Now that the masts were down its dark bulk could be seen against the fog. There was a shelter, at least, where warmth might be had, and dryness. Slopping with bare feet through the main-deck wash the steward entered the galley and began to build a fire.

There was more wind. The sea sucked and mourned around the broken hull. The dull pounding of the broken spars against the side had the monotony of bandless drums. The steward found his wood wet, and a vagrant sea had filled the stove. But his teeth were clicking with cold, and he chattered to himself as he persevered with greasy rags and sputtering matches.

He could hear the shrill quarrelling of the skipper and the mate, released from their trap by his own exit, but still hanging on to the shelter of the companionway. Mr. Luckett's voice rose to bitter frenzy; the skipper's remarks might be called frightened sneers. The steward coughed in the biting reek of wood smoke. He thrust his head out through the lee door and butted into the breast of a dripping man just about to stagger in.

"Gawd love me, stooard, don't tell me I'm alive! I thought I wos dead, an' clapped into a Rooshian hell! Cripes! Give us a taste o' the fire!"

The steward stared, fearfully, into the red-streaked face of the sailor from the forepeak. He scarcely believed the man was alive. But the body that thrust past him to cringe over the barely warm stove was solid and heavy, and the running current of mingled profanity and complaining was in the voice of a man far from dead.

" 'T wuzn't old Post's fault I wuzn't murdered down there. If you hadn't unlocked them bilboes I'd be in Fiddler's Green all right. I bet he didn't git drownded. Hope he did, though. Cripes, stooard, that thar fire's colder'n death!"

Abruptly the mate's white face appeared in the doorway, grinning with cold and rage. His eyes glittered as he sought to make out who was the speaker. The skipper's face peered over the mate's shoulder, and the lips were parted, the eyes blearily wide.

"Cripes, stooard, that thar fire's colder'n death!" the sailor said.

The words died away. The sailor

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crouched over the stove. As silently as he had come, the skipper vanished again, and the slapping pad of his rubber-booted feet alone told that he was getting back to the poop as fast as the reeling deck would let him.

"Where d'you come from?" snarled Mr. Luckett nervously, crowding beside the bruised and half drowned sailor.

"Out o' ——, an' no thanks to you!" roared the sailor.

" 'T was Mr. Luckett give me the key," said the steward, gently, tying a kettle of water to the stove rail. "What 'll we do, Mister Luckett? Cap'n says the brig won't sink, but she feels like she's bound to break up. S'pose you go see what he wants us to do. I'll make us all some hot coffee."

The brig rolled soddenly. The water slopped from the pot, hissing on the warming stove. A leaden gray curl of sea flooded the deck through the shattered bulwarks, and gurgled across the galley floor.

Some bricks from the flooring, forced up by the brig's straining, tumbled about the feet of the three men.

"He can do as he —— pleases, I'm going to start building a raft," said the mate. "This brig's breaking up. The mainmast busted both boats to staves when it fell. Where's your ax?"

BY DAWN the breeze had blown away the fog. It blew too much. The mate and his two helpers had collected a mass of wreckage beside the galley, but progress was painfully slow.

Captain Post kept to himself in the companionway, peering out furtively, making no effort to help or guide, or even to order until he saw the steward bearing steaming mugs of coffee to the others. Then he bellowed for his share, and the mate carried it to him with vicious rage in his eye. Mr. Luckett returned to the galley with grinning defeat on his lips.

"The swine's got a gun, or I'd ha' shown him!" he gritted.

"Oughter tell 'im go scratch for cawfee. He got 'is rum. Do 'e orfer us any?" grumbled the sailor.

"He's lost his brig. Maybe he don't feel none too good," said the steward, most of his short-lived anger already gone.

AN HOUR later the steward carried a salt beef and biscuit sandwich to the skipper. The raft was growing, but hands were few. Neither the mate nor the sailor wanted to give the skipper breakfast; it was the steward who realized that an extra pair of hands was worth trying to get.

He found Post sitting on the top step of the companionway, arms wrapped about knees, a bottle in one hand, a revolver in the other, listening to the wash of the water beneath him, but keeping an eye on the outer deck.

"Bite o' food, Cap'n," said the steward. "Can't work without food."

"How many have you got in that galley?" grinned Post, ignoring the food.

"Wot, sangwidges?"

"Men." The skipper's eye wandered uneasily.

"None too many to build that raft, Cap'n. Mister Luckett sez as you might lend a hand, sir. Feels as if th' brig's goin' to pieces."

"Tell the mate to get a move on, then, and report to me when it's ready."

Post cackled half-wittedly. The steward stood regarding him in puzzled fashion, holding out the biscuit and beef.

"If I was you, sir, I'd get outside and lend a hand," he said presently. "This companion-house is workin' adrift. A good sea 'ud carry it over th' side."

"You giving me orders?" queried Post, thickly, leering up with cunning grin. The steward had no time to disavow any such notion. The skipper pulled up his revolver in wildly wavering grip, and fired a shot which blew the biscuit and beef to fragments from the steward's hand. And as the steward ran back to the galley in fright, the skipper's laugh followed him crazily.

"He's mad as a 'atter!" he reported to Mr. Luckett. "He shot at me!"

When the sea had risen to dangerous height, and the wind blew half a gale, three men fought desperately with planks, casks, broken spars and rope, striving to keep the mass from being swept out to sea before it was fashioned into a raft. Every sea poured over the loggy hulk. The brig's decks began to burst and pieces of cargo floated out.

Turning to the galley, where at least was warmth and food of a sort, for a moment's respite from their bruising toil, they

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found the skipper there, sprawled on the only seat in front of the stove, licking his chops over the last drop of coffee and the last scrap of cooked beef. One moment sufficed for them to understand that he had fled from the tottering companionway to the shelter of the galley, but with no more intention of playing a man's part than before. The man was full of rum, his hand hung to the floor, still gripping the revolver. His face was a mask of foolishness and contempt.

"Put some more coffee on, steward. Some food, too," he stuttered.

"Let me talk to him!" snarled Mr. Luckett savagely, thrusting in between. "He's a hog, that's what he is, and I'm going to—"

The sailor was pushing in also, as cold and hungry as the mate. There was a deeper roll of the brig, a heavier crash of sea, and the wreck of the companionway was hurled forward to collide against the galley. The lashings that held the galley structure to the deck by ringbolts creaked under the strain.

The deck sloped giddily, toppling the skipper to the streaming floor, and catapulting the other three men through the open doorway. The steward caught the lintel and recovered first. The skipper, groping wildly, gripped him by the leg, dropping his revolver, and the steward snatched it up just before Mr. Luckett and the sailor hauled themselves back, still regarding Post murderously.

"Mister Luckett, there ain't time to play th' goat," the steward panted, kicking to free his leg. "Don't you waste yer time 'ammerin' 'im, sir. Besides, it's mutiny. Get the lashings on that raft, sir, else we'll all drown."

"Gar! Lemme git a wallop at 'im fer luck!" growled the sailor. "I owe 'im one—"

The pistol suddenly exploded in the steward's hand; a bullet spanged against the stove.

"Don't waste your time," said the steward, looking scared of the gun, but holding it at an awkwardly efficient angle. The mate and the sailor backed out, dodged a sea, and fumbled at the lashings of the raft, still with their eyes turned toward the seemingly frightened steward and the awkwardly held gun.

"I ain't goin' to let you men take out yer spite on Cap'n Post. Wot good'll it do yer to beat 'im up? Don't waste yer time," the steward called after them.

Then, before they had well taken their work in hand again, the steward poked the revolver muzzle under Post's nose and ordered him sharply to stand up.

"Up wiv you! I mean it, sir! I don't want t' kill yer, but—"

Post staggered to his feet, staring eyed and open mouthed, shuffling away from the steward as far as the narrow galley would permit. Outside, the sailor laughed uproariously; the mate grinned as he hauled taut a hitch.

"Danged if th' doctor ain't goin' to trim 'im hisself!" roared the sailor. "Hope he shoots 'im stiff."

"Them quiet little coves!" muttered Mr. Luckett.

Apparently all the revenge they would have taken themselves was being well taken care of by the wizened little steward. They saw hard blows dealt with a piece of mahogany firewood in a sinewy, small fist, and they saw Captain Post staggering from side to side of the galley, his hands raised to guard his head, and they heard him cursing horribly. They heard the profanity dwindle and cease; but they did not hear the steward's muttered oration, punctuated with blows, forced upon an unwilling audience of one with the threat of the revolver.

"This ain't mutiny, sir. This is medicine. You ain't no cap'n now, sir. You're only a boozy beast wot's lost a fine brig an' mebbe one or two men. Don't try to get outside, sir, or I'll shoot! Lord love me, I will! You goin' to do a man's part? You goin' to lend a 'and, sir? You 'll be better dead if you won't, for them blokes out there won't 'ave you on the raft wiv them as a passenger. Come on back, I ain't done wiv you yet. You goin' to be cap'n, or you goin' to be a whipped houn'?"

The stick of mahogany thudded heavily on Post's head and body with every demand, and there was nothing gentle about any part of the medicine except the old steward's voice, which was almost a weepy wail.

"—— your soul, let up! I'll turn-to! I'll pay you for this, don't forget!" yelled Post, and the steward let fall the stick. He still held the pistol, and held it just as awkwardly as before while he felt the skipper's pockets and dragged out a bottle half full of rum.

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"Pay when we 're all safe, sir," the steward said gently. "Is it your orders, sir, that the men have a rum ration?"

CAPTAIN POST had been a good seaman in his day. He went to work with the mate and the sailor in a shakily efficient way, while the steward puttered around the giddily staggering galley collecting food for the raft. Not long could the brig last. The galley lashings were parting. Seas made a clean breach across the decks. Mr. Luckett kept glancing queerly at the skipper as he passed expert lashings about the raft. The sailor was not the sort to merely glance.

"You're the bloke as puts blokes in irons fer nothink. Ain't so almighty clever when a skinny little cook takes arter you, are you? Good fer 'im. 'Ope he leaves yer behind—"

Post straightened up with a curse, raised his hand to strike the man, and the sailor spat gleefully.

" 'It me, will ya? Just wot I been waitin' for! Come on!" he howled, heedless of the seas that now flooded about their legs.

"If you 'it 'im I'll shoot!" yelped the steward, and Post shrank back, looking fearfully toward the gun.

But the gun was not pointed at him; it menaced the sailor, whose face was blank with bewilderment.

"Put yer weight here, and shove off!" growled Mr. Luckett uneasily. "Stooard! Lend a hand here. We'll all be adrift in a minute!"

There was truly no time to spare. The raft floated on the next sea that poured over the deck. The planking of the brig ripped away in vast fragments which threatened the lives of them all. The steward threw out an apron tied around some stores, and kicked at a water bareca lashed inside the galley. He was on the threshhold, when the entire galley parted its moorings and crashed through the broken bulwarks into the sea.

"Shove off here!" yelled the mate, cutting away at the ropes holding the raft.

The steward hastily fastened his stores to the raft, and put his puny weight to moving it clear of the entangling rigging that was strewn by every sea over the deck. The sailor worked manfully, all befuddled by the actions of the steward. Captain Post toiled with a piece of plank, working the raft toward a safe launching place, and the next sea floated it clear, held by one rope.

"Shove clear, lively!" roared the mate, still assuming command.

"Where's that stiff goin' to? Shove off!" bawled the sailor, staring after the skipper, who was floundering through the streaming froth toward the forecastle.

"Let him go. Hold on a minit," the steward cried, staying the mate's knife from cutting the last rope.

"Ho, you got it in for 'im proper, ain't you!" the sailor cackled. "Wan t' see 'im drownded, hey?"

"He's crazy! Shove off!" bawled the mate, hacking at the rope.

Post staggered from the forecastle again, and the brig rolled over as he appeared, the raft tore loose, and he was overwhelmed in a roaring sea. The raft floated clear, among a litter of wreck, and the steward peered at the seething water.

"Bound ter see th' larst of 'im, ain't you!" chuckled the sailor. "Sarves 'im right, I say!"

Then the steward seized a rope-end, and floundered into the sea toward the skipper's gasping face, emerging from a raffle of gear. The rope was fast to the raft. In a few minutes steward and skipper were in safety, while the mate and the sailorman regarded both wonderingly.

"Nobody in th' forecastle—must have got clear—" gasped the skipper, flattening himself down against the raft and sobbing nervously. The steward nodded gently, and sobbed too, from weakness.

With lashings passed around each one for greater security, and a pole raised with a streamer of canvas fluttering from it, the castaways watched the brig slowly disintegrate and pass from sight.

"Shall I issue a ration o' rum, sir?" the steward asked, when the day was all but spent and a bitter night loomed near.

"——! Wot y' arsk 'im for?" grumbled the sailor.

"Shall I, Cap'n?" the steward repeated, respectfully. Mr. Luckett looked on curiously.

He had given up command to the skipper as naturally as if Captain Post had never been anything but the perfect ship master.

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"STOOARD'S a 'ot lot, ain't he, Mister Luckett?" the sailor muttered hoarsely when darkness had fallen, and they had eaten their poor rations.

" 'Ammered the Old Man 'most to death wiv a stick, nearly got drownded hisself gittin' him outa the water, and now he's jest like a little dawg under his feet again. He's waitin' ter git him ashore to do him up properly, I betcha. You and me 'll see—"

Mr. Luckett had also wondered. He too had wanted to beat up the skipper; might gladly have watched him drown. All out of bitterness, too. Just revenge. There was something different in the behavior of the steward. Something which Mr. Luckett vaguely saw as the spirit of his own conduct in the long-ago first flush of rising ambition as a seaman—loyalty. And as the howling night closed upon the raft, and he raised a tenderly nursed lantern to the pole set up for it, he thought he saw, as by its light, some glimmering of the truth.

"Listen, m' son," he said, fiercely gripping the sailor's arm, you must have got a knock on the head down in the forepeak. You ain't properly sensible. You've seen things that ain't so, haven't you, now? I haven't been knocked on the head. I haven't seen no stooard hammer the skipper. You haven't, either. I heard stooard say something about medicine. That's all. You got yours, didn't you? You're mistook, sailor, you're mistook. Shake the cobwebs outa your eyes. There ain't been any hammerin' done, and you ain't seen any. And you'll say what the stooard says, and what I say, and the stooard won't get into no trouble because of what we say either. Where'd you be only for him, eh?"

"Maybe I wuz crazy wi' the cold," muttered the sailor, huddling down to dodge the sprays. "Never can tell about them quiet little fellers, anyhow."

BULLDOG

by L. Patt

Author of "Meeks," "The Guardsman," etc.

"IT'S a treat to get back home," said old Bill Stevens as he and his partner, "Flatfoot" Hawkins, came in from End of Steel late in March. "Here's you and me been all over the James Bay country this winter, Flatfoot, and we ain't seen one place that can stand up against our own shack and neck of woods."

"We seen lots, but you're perishin' right, Bill." Flatfoot, who had slipped out of English army life into that of the bush country, and who liked the change, agreed with his little partner. "There's the smoke from Danby's Stoppin' Place."

Old Bill lengthened his stride, the snowshoes crunching the packed snow of the trail as he put on speed.

"In a minute we'll see the old hoss-thief hisself," said Bill Stevens.

"In a minute we'll see my bulldog, Chelsea Liz," Flatfoot supplemented. "And if Danby ain't looked after that pup proper,

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he'll hear from me, that he will. Bulldogs is bulldogs."

"Bulldogs is British," Bill corrected him. "And as such don't bend until they break. So if Danby and your Chelsea Liz has fell out, it won't be the bulldog that suffers." He grinned as he remembered certain incidents in Flatfoot's past—how the big English ex-soldier had met and overcome several crises. "No, sir, you're a wonderful people, you Britishers," Bill went on. "You don't rightly know how to do nothing, but when everything's over you always seem to have done a heap, just the same."

"Muddlin' through, they calls it," Flatfoot agreed, modestly. "I got a theory we just keep tryin' and sooner or later, when there ain't no —— wrong way left, we find the right one. Muddlin' through it is."

"Just the same—" Bill, slightly in the lead, rounded a bend in the trail and saw before him Danby's Stoppin' Place, sole store, hotel, and outpost of civilization in that sparsely settled region—"just the same, it's to be hoped Danby didn't quarrel with your Chelsea Liz. Though if he did it's your fault for making a young lady bulldog peevish."

"And how did I make her peevish?" asked Flatfoot with a show of heat.

"By tacking such a name to her. I heard tell of Chelsea buns but never of Chelsea bulldogs," Bill complained. "And Liz ain't a nice refined name, anyways, even leavin' aside that there bun word."

"Now you listen to me," Flatfoot growled. "I knew a girl called Liz back in Chelsea where the Guards had their —— barracks. And when I got that there bulldog pup sent me last fall by them kindhearted sports, I thought of her—fine upstandin' girl she was too."

"You thought of your old girl when you seen that bulldog," Bill laughed. "The resemblance bein' so startlin'. But—" He stopped suddenly. From the door of Danby's store, a scant hundred yards ahead, burst a man. "That guy ain't muddlin' none, though, Flatfoot," Bill diagnosed the case. "He's got fifty pounds of British bulldog meat hanging to his jeans. No, sir, he ain't muddlin' through none to speak of. He ain't got time, not for being British."

The man did not waste any time, either. He was a tall chap, and a stranger to both of them. But if Flatfoot did not know him, it was perfectly plain that Flatfoot's bulldog, Chelsea Liz, was better acquainted. For she was hanging on to the stranger like grim death, her stubby, heavy body swaying from side to side as he ran.

He made for the belt of trees on the far side of the Stoppin' Place, did this afflicted stranger, leaped up, caught a branch and heaved desperately. Chelsea Liz's hind legs, which had hitherto supported part of her weight, came clear of the ground. There was a rending noise. Then the stranger was free.

Chelsea Liz, snarling grimly, unclamped her iron jaw. A fragment of jaggedly torn cloth fell to the ground.

She sniffed it. Then glared aloft out of red-hawed eyes. The stranger, safe for the moment in the lower fork of the tree, saw her expression and concluded that Chelsea Liz was still hostile.

"Now ain't that a shame." Flatfoot brushed by old Bill and made for the door of the Stoppin' Place, where Danby himself stood watching.

"You're skyhooting right it's a shame," Bill agreed, hurrying after him. "If you was a human being you'd call off that murderous lady dog of yourn, Flatfoot."

"I wasn't thinking of the man. I was considerin' the feelings of my bulldog," Flatfoot explained. "Call her off nothing. Him, he's made his bed. Let him lie on it. But Chelsea Liz, it's tirin' on a dog, that sort of travelin' she just done."

The man up the tree saw them, called for help.

"He's made his bed. Let him lie on it," Flatfoot repeated.

"Unless he's a eagle it won't be any too comfortable," Bill suggested, humanely. "What's up, Danby?" he asked the keeper of the Stoppin' Place.

"You seen the procession?" Danby shifted his quid of chewing into his cheek. "It's give real pleasure to all hands 'cept yonder birdie that's gone to roost."

"What'd he do to Chelsea Liz?" Flatfoot asked. "You can't tell me that a lady dog in her early girlhood, so to speak, started chasing him for fun. No, sir, he done something to her, and before I haul him down to hand him a licking I want to know what it was."

"He done nothing to your Chelsea Liz, Flatfoot," Danby explained. "But he done a heap to my collie dog. Kicked my Buster in the slats for sniffing his heels

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polite as dogs will. Him with heavy boots, too, the dirty lumberjack. And Liz yonder, bein' my collie dog's lady friend, took at him like you saw."

"You take it sort of calm," Bill Stevens had hitherto rather sided with the man up the tree. "Me, if a common ordinary man kicked a dog o' mine, I'd gentle him. And if that man was a dad-ratted larrigan-sportin' lumberjack, I'd shoot him. And as for you, Flatfoot Hawkins, you'd best step out and call off your pup before she gets a mouthful of yellow lumberjack meat. It's poison to any decent critter."

"I'm not interferin'," Flatfoot stared morosely at the distant tree. Chelsea Liz stood on guard. The tall lumberjack was shifting uncomfortably about in the branches. "Me, I'm disappointed," Flatfoot went on. "I come back here after a winter away expectin' that there pup to come out and welcome me proper, as a man's dog should. And what do I find? She's got familiar with a perfect stranger."

"YOU find her doing her duty real British," Bill laughed, but suddenly became deadly serious. "Where's this bird lumberin'?" he asked Danby.

"Cuttin' pine for John Payne, is this Waldo Wiggins," Danby answered.

"Payne ain't got no good pine in these parts." Bill scratched his head. "Unless—you ain't meanin' that stand two mile above our shack?"

"What else?" Danby retorted. "Payne's bringing out a slather of spruce on South River and he'll just drive that pine down to the Forks where the Swift comes in. Then his main gang'll drive the whole lot on to the mill. Leastways that's how he figgers on doin' it. But that Waldo Wiggins is no —— as you may judge, and his gang's mostly runty bohunks hired cheap, and I'm statin' Payne won't get a stick of pine to his mill this year."

"Lumberin'! This is a —— of a welcome home." Bill started toward the tree where the unfortunate Waldo still clung.

"Where you going?" Flatfoot asked.

"If there's anything I hate more'n lumbermen in general it's lumbermen that cuts on my range," Bill growled. "I'm going to reason with that there nestin' bird o' ill omen, and before I'm done I wouldn't be surprized if he laid a egg from fright."

"Hands off, chum," Flatfoot followed him. "That there's my dog, not yours, my mess not yours. If there's fighting needed it's my fight."

Bill gave in reluctantly.

"Very well," he agreed, "Just you remember that yonder guy is cuttin' trees where we set traps, ruinin' our country after the fashion of lumbermen. And if you don't manhandle him proper I'm going to come in."

They walked over to the tree.

"Call off that —— dog," wailed Waldo Wiggins, a trifle pettishly.

"C'mere, Chelsea Liz," Flatfoot called.

The bulldog looked him over, recognized in this big newcomer a man who had brought her, a partly grown pup, to Danby's the previous fall, and decided she was among friends. She came over to Flatfoot and nuzzled his leg, growling in the peculiarly blood-curdling manner that bulldogs consider friendly conversation.

"Wouldn't hurt nobody," Flatfoot bent and patted her. But his eye was on the reassured Waldo sliding down out of that tree. "No, sir," said Flatfoot, "*She* wouldn't hurt nobody, but *I* would, you yellow dog-kicking lumberjack."

Waldo, his feet on the ground and the bulldog apparently pacified, became once more a man instead of a monkey.

"You'd hurt me, huh?" he squared off.

"Hit him proper, the dirty lumberjack," Bill Stevens capered about in pleased anticipation.

"If you can," snarled big Waldo, "if you can, you blanked—"

But Flatfoot cut off further speech with his first well directed straight left. It caught Waldo flush on the mouth.

Waldo was game when it came to man against man stuff. He struck back, a vicious blow that almost reached its target, the angle of Flatfoot's jaw.

But if Waldo was quick, Chelsea Liz, that sleeping brindle volcano, was quicker. Here was her master mixing it with the hated stranger. Here was her target offering itself once more, the white patch that showed through the lumber boss's torn pants, making a perfect bullseye.

Chelsea Liz launched herself into the fray. From the corner of his eye Waldo saw her come. He broke ground, turned, ran.

"I ain't fightin' two men and a dog,"

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he called back over his shoulder. "You wait till I get you alone, you —— —"

But just then he had to devote himself entirely to running. Chelsea Liz followed through the deep soft snow as fast as her peculiar architecture would permit.

"That's a —— of an interferin' dog, Flatfoot," Bill Stevens complained. "You was just gettin' started proper, wasn't you— Well, we'll meet up with this here Waldo again one of these days if that there fool dog don't chase him clear to the United States."

"C'mere, Liz C'mere," Flatfoot broke into a lumbering run.

Waldo Wiggins had cut across the snow clad ground towards a beaten trail. As soon as he reached the better going he increased his pace. Chelsea Liz, floundering after him was not making much speed. Flatfoot caught up with her, grabbed her by the collar, hauled her back on her haunches.

"He ain't your meat, lass, he's mine," said Flatfoot Hawkins.

Chelsea Liz, as if understanding perfectly just what doom awaited the disappearing stranger, became calm.

"Where's he flew to?" Old Bill, coming back to the store, asked Danby. "Ain't no trail yonder unless its your wood lot road."

"You don't expect lumberjacks to sprout wings and fly, do you, Bill?" Danby shifted the quid back to its parking place. "Them bohunks has a winter road brushed out clean past the rapids by your cabin. It's a heap shorter than your trail, too. That Waldo'll be home in an hour the gait he's travelin'. He come down for tobacco, he did, but he's went home with lots else. You'd best take that trail yourself, Bill, if you're bound home."

"I'll travel no lumberman's road o' ruin," Bill growled, "Danged country spoilers."

"Then how'll you get that bulldog in to your shack?" Danby asked.

"I don't aim to get her in," Bill winked meaningly. "I wants this Wild Waldo to meet up with Flatfoot proper. And the ——dog spoils the sport. Now you can do me a good turn. You tell Flatfoot you'll keep the brute till the break-up. Then he can get her up in a canoe. Otherwise the danged fool'll try to pack fifty pound of dog meat in over our trail on snowshoes, which same he's only learned to use this winter, him bein' heretofore addicted to them skiis. And him due to mix it with this Waldo, who's big and strong, why he'd best save his strength for business."

"I FEEL lonesome-like without my dog," sighed Flatfoot Hawkins.

It was three weeks later. The partners had been busy, putting their shack to rights, cutting wood for the next year, attending to the hundred and one things that they must do before spring brought the first of the city sports looking for guides.

"I feel perishin' lonely, strike me —— well pink if I don't," sighed Flatfoot again. "I wish I'd packed that dog in."

"There'll be runnin' water between here and Danby's soon," Bill sighed too—but for another reason. "You can easy paddle down and get her. Wish my sorrows'd clear up as easy— Hark. You can hear them timber butchers choppin' from here. It ain't right, Flatfoot. And if there's law in this man's country, it ought to be stopped."

"I don't see what can be done by law," Flatfoot said as he scratched his head, for Bill and logic seemed strangers. "This here John Payne buys the limit and cuts the timber, and that's his right, isn't it?"

"What about me? Ain't I trapped here ten year?" Bill asked, indignantly. "Ain't I got no rights, me that loves this country? Why, the next thing they'll come in and raise crops. And me, I got to set here and watch a bunch of shiftless bohunks and this Waldo Wiggins stream drive right past my cabin door, like I was dirt under their calked boots. But let's mosey up and look the outfit over, now we're caught up on the chores. You got unfinished business with that Waldo, my pink struck Britisher, and the sooner we get it done up the better I'll be pleased." Flatfoot failed to enthuse.

"What'd I want to pick a fight with him for?" he asked. "Chelsea Liz handed him what-for. I was mad then, but I'm peaceable now."

"He's a lumberman and a dog-kicker," Bill suggested hopefully.

"But it don't help that none to put a head on him," Flatfoot objected.

"You're muddlin' through again, you Britisher," Bill taunted. "Trouble with all you blamed immigrants is you ain't adaptable. Mebbe it won't help to stop the lumberin', but it'll sure help me to feel

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better if you finish that scrap. And if you don't do that same, me, I will. Me that's a poor weak old man."

Flatfoot, who had seen this poor weak old man in action, merely smiled at this.

"I'm game to go visit him social," he said at last, remembering that this Waldo had indeed kicked a dog. "And if the blighter wants to finish the fight I'm game. But I'll pick a fight with no man in cold blood."

"Don't you worry, Flatfoot," Bill laughed contentedly. "Lumber camps heats the blood a heap. And with his gang back of him this Waldo will likely beat your can off. Wish you had your bulldog along. She certainly put the Indian sign on to him. He don't fear the man like he does the brute."

"You'd make a chipmunk tackle a tiger," complained Flatfoot. "Here I was, peaceful inclined until you got to talking, and now I feel like milling a round or two with this Waldo, right away."

"It's two mile to his camp," Bill triumphed, "and me, I plan to talk real irritatin' all the way. Kick a dog, would he? Now a man who'd kick a nice dog like Danby's collie, Buster, ain't—"

"Say no more," Flatfoot growled. "Don't get me real angry. I don't want to kill this lumberjack. Let's go."

They found the lumber camp two miles above, a small shanty, a smaller stable and a dozen undersized bohunks working in the bush. By the river where the ice was already breaking up, high-piled skidways of pine stood. With the freshet these would be slid into the stream to start on their long journey down Swift River to its junction with the South Branch at the Forks, and thence to John Payne's mill. Another week, and the drive would commence.

Waldo Wiggins was laying down the law to a teamster who had got off the road into deep snow, and the teamster was talking back. He was having his troubles, was Waldo. To begin with, he was a poor one at handling men and these were poor men, to boot, with the exception of the sassy teamster. And he was behind with his cutting, behind with the skidways—and the drive almost at hand.

He sighted the two partners as they came up the river. His face brightened as he saw that Chelsea Liz, the demon bulldog, was not with them.

"Here's where I get square," snarled Waldo Wiggins, shedding his mackinaw. "You lookin' for somebody, you blamed, blanked wood-rats?" he raised his voice. "Don't rightly care if you be or not. You've found *me*."

"Ain't he nice spoken, Flatfoot?" Bill muttered.

Flatfoot's good nature had returned. Even to his unpractised eye it was apparent that Waldo was having troubles of his own. And that new patch in the man's trousers reminded Flatfoot that punishment had been meted out once already for the crime of dog-kicking.

"We come up to pass the time o' day," he answered pleasantly. Old Bill Stevens' face fell. The sight of the actual lumbering operations right where he had caught two black foxes did not make him any happier.

"You did, huh?" Waldo looked around confidently. "And what did you find? Anything that don't suit you?" He came toward them. "What if you find this?" said Waldo, and he struck out viciously at Flatfoot Hawkins.

"If you will have it, here it comes. Now, you bloodthirsty old varmint, Bill Stevens, here's the war you wanted."

Flatfoot, parrying the blow went into action.

They milled about briskly, boxing with equal skill, testing each other out. Old Bill, to all appearances, had his eyes glued on that fight, but nevertheless a man of his experience was not to be caught napping. So, when the teamster, hitherto only a spectator, unhitched the brake chain from the rear bob of his sled and came sneaking up on the combatants, old Bill was Johnny-on-the-spot. His foot slid out, hooked that teamster on the ankle and upset him into the deep snow beside the road.

"You keep out o' this," Bill advised, standing over him, ready for action. "This here's a fair fight."

"It won't be—not with this Waldo in it," the teamster answered. "What'd you butt in for? Your man ain't got a chance, and, me, I was aimin' to slug Wiggins, me owing him somewhat."

"He's plumb popular with his hired help, ain't he," Bill grinned. "Well, you'll get all the satisfaction you want watchin' good old Flatfoot whale the tar out o' him."

"He's only fightin' with his hands, and Waldo—"the teamster scrambled back on

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the beaten road—"Look out for Waldo's boots!" he warned.

Flatfoot, boxing scientifically, got the warning too late. Waldo Wiggins, being one of those who fight wholeheartedly with everything handy and who don't worry about rules or fair play, had decided that, as fists alone wouldn't win for him he might try other means. One heavily booted foot swung up, rasped along Flatfoot's ribs, thudded against his armpit. His left arm went numb.

"You perishin' rotten chorus lady. Kick high, chum, you won't do that again," he gasped and stepped back.

WALDO came on, confidently. He saw that the man had but one good arm, now. He could finish him with his fists. But Waldo, having found the lashing kick a reliable weapon, resorted to it again.

"Look out, look out," Bill Stevens cried. But Flatfoot was Johnny-on-the-spot himself this time. He stepped in as Waldo's boot came up, whirled around, bringing his good right arm into action, taking the force of the kick on his ribs with a grunt of agony. Then his big hand clutched Waldo's ankle and—

"Now kick high, you ruddy ballet dancer," snarled Flatfoot Hawkins. "You want dirt and dirt you'll get."

He heaved upwards. Waldo tottered for a second, then went over backwards.

Scarce had he lit on the hard beaten road when Flatfoot was on top of him.

"Knee in the guts—not pretty but —— useful," Bill commented to the admiring teamster. "Now Flatfoot alter his map."

Flatfoot lifted his good right hand. Waldo writhing between his conqueror's knees, moaned feebly with what breath he had left.

"I ain't got the heart," Flatfoot got up. "I'm too —— human."

Waldo tried to rise, but could not. His ankle turned under him.

"Thought I heard it click when I threw him," Flatfoot kneeled by his side again, and unlaced his heavy boot. Already the ankle was swelling. "You'll kick no more dogs nor men either, for a spell," decided Flatfoot Hawkins. Then he turned to Bill Stevens. "I hope you're —— well satisfied, you old reptile. Here's this man laid out and me with my ribs broke most likely, me that come to pay a social call."

"Get to be adaptable, you immigrant boy," advised the unrepentant Bill Stevens. "This here scrap just shows you the habits o' lumbermen. It's the custom o' the country. You get used to it, Flatfoot Hawkins, you get used to it."

Old Bill rubbed his hands in satisfaction for a moment as two of the lumbermen, running up, carried big Waldo into the shack.

"Anyways, you muddled through real British, Flatfoot," said he. "Ending up by picking the right way. A knee in the guts to them that deserves it is no disgrace."

A WEEK later the ice was out of Swift River. Standing by the rapids below their cabin, Flatfoot and Bill watched the head of the drive as the first logs took the white water.

"It beats —— how they do it," Bill marveled. "Here's this Waldo bird holed up, nursin' his ankle and runnin' the drive from his bed of pain. And that teamster, the only other man of them that ever smelled sawdust, let alone seen a drive, has quit. It sure beats all how them bohunks even got this here drive started."

"I'm surprized at that John Payne. He didn't make his million lumberin' chancey like this," Flatfoot hazarded.

"Shucks," Bill replied, "this ain't but a flea-bite to John Payne. He can afford to lose this pine. But you and me, Flatfoot, if it jams, have you figgered what'll happen to us? It'll look nice, us guidin sports into the wilderness and have them see nothing but a river full of logs. Yessir, if she jams you can bet your bottom dollar there'll be logs over every decent pool for two miles. And this the best bit o' trout water on the whole river. But shucks, even them bohunks can ride a drive through on this high water."

However, old Bill was wrong. An hour later a big pine log crashed into its smaller fellow athwart the rocks on which the two partners stood watching. The smaller log up-ended, jammed in a crevice. The big log swung further across, bridging the gap between rock and rock. In a minute a tangled mass of timber covered the white water from shore to shore.

"They done it. They done it," Old Bill danced excitedly. "The danged furrin' fools has jammed the rapids. Hey

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here—" He made for one of the men who stood stolidly by, picking tentatively at the mess— "Give me that pikepole till I hook the key log out."

The man whirled about, menacing old Bill with his ironshod pole. Waldo had issued strict orders that they were to have neither truck nor trade with the two partners.

"Ye danged fool," Bill spat disgustedly as others of the drive gang came running up. "I was just tryin' to help ye."

He figured up the odds. There were ten of the bohunks. They talked and gesticulated angrily. Evidently those who had just come up were blaming old Bill for the jam itself.

"Come away. Come away," Flatfoot grabbed his old partner by the arm.

"I'm coming. I'm coming. Ain't a mite of use staying. Never get her clear with them idjits on the warpath. But I'm going further than the cabin, me. Yes for a fact, Flatfoot. I'm goin' to End o' Steel to send a telegram."

"You won't shift them logs by telegrams." Flatfoot looked back at the piling mass of timber. "The place to win a battle is where the fighting is."

"This here battle's lost already," Bill advised him. "Me, I'm going to win the next one. I'll square accounts with this John Payne, lumbering all over a respectable man's range and fillin' his fish water full o' saw-logs."

"And how'll you do that?" asked Flatfoot.

"I'll wire my Member o' Parleyment," Bill told him. "I think I voted for him, though a man that's moved around considerable like me mightn't know which o' them politicians he did vote for. Howsomever, if that there Member o' Parleyment thinks he can set there in Ottawa, livin' splendid on the country's money and not look after his friends at home, he's going to get jolted. Yessir, I'll put it up to him. If he can't make this John Payne shift them logs before the water drops he can work it so he'll have to haul 'em out one by one to rot on the bank later on. And if there ain't a law he can —— well make a new one. —— knows, them birds make laws enough when they want to. Politics, Flatfoot. That's the game I'll play. I'll send wires and pull wires."

"It don't sound reasonable," Flatfoot shook his head.

"Course it don't," Bill agreed. "But if you see any reason in them logs piled up there, you'll surprize me, you will."

"There's better ways out o' this mess," Flatfoot said.

"Then muddle through to 'em, and leave me to go my own way," said old Bill tartly.

He knew that his own idea was a bit bizarre and impractical. But it sounded so fine that he was bound to see it through. With never a word more, he made for the cabin, got his stuff together and started for the Stoppin' Place and End o' Steel.

Flatfoot turned on his heel. Two miles up river was Waldo, the boss of this drive. Flatfoot decided that this was, after all, Waldo's business. He started up towards the lumber camp.

The shanty was deserted, save for the cook and Waldo himself. The big boss lay on a bunk. The cook sat beside him. On a low bench near-by was a deck of greasy cards and a bottle of gin.

"What the —— you want," Waldo raised himself on one elbow. The cook grabbed a double-bitted ax. He had seen Flatfoot Hawkins in action upon his last visit.

"Jam at the Rapids below," Flatfoot told him.

"W-w-what the-hic- —— do I care? You get out!" Waldo sank back. "If the —— comes closer, Billybedamn, you brain him."

Billybedamn the cook lifted the ax menacingly.

"Who the hic-hic— D'ye know who's lumberin' this stream?" Waldo asked with offended dignity. "Me, I'm bosh—bosh—boss!" And he reached for the gin bottle.

"Precious fine boss," Flatfoot looked him over. "Perishin' inspiration to your men, you are, my man." He saw that there was nothing to be gained here. Waldo had evidently gone to pieces. "It's up to me," said Flatfoot Hawkins as he slipped out. "I'll maybe muddle through British fashion since I'm not adaptable on the word of a better man than I am. Anyway, I'll not sit idle and wait for parliament to fix things." And downstream he went.

HE FOUND the bohunks still pecking away sparrow fashion at the jam. There was not a decent riverman in the whole gang. And in their present mood they would not let a stranger butt in. They had their

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orders from Waldo. Probably he ruled them by a combination of fear and gin. There seemed no way out unless—

Flatfoot climbed up to his cabin. When he returned he held athwart his big body a rifle, its muzzle menacing them.

"Now, you perishin' bounders, we'll have a bit o' good order and military discipline," said Flatfoot Hawkins.

A big bohunk with more guts than his fellows swung his long pikepole around, gripped it like a spear and came charging.

Flatfoot brought the rifle up. There was a shart report, the crack of splintering wood. The bullet thudded into the wooden pole a scant six inches from the big bohunk's hand.

"Next time my bullet'll hit meat," said Flatfoot. "No you don't, you blighter."

He swung about as one of the gang made for the woods. The rifle cracked again. The man stopped in his tracks, his face white. That bullet had cut through the crown of his felt hat.

"Fall to. Fall to," Flatfoot commanded. "Start at the top and pry them logs off one by one." He slipped two more cartridges into his magazine. "Make them boathooks talk."

The gang huddled together, uncertainly. Finally they obeyed. Flatfoot watched. He wished he knew something about this business. He had heard old Bill's remark about the key log. But how could his unpractised eye pick out any particular stick. Logs there were in plenty, lying every which way in heaped-up confusion. One of them, the key, held the jam locked.

He could only work by the method of elimination. So all the rest of that day his gang sweated uselessly.

At night he herded them up the hill to the cabin, fed them sparingly from his own grub, then locked them in for the night. With rifle and blankets, he settled down outside to pass a cheerless time.

"What a perishin' relief it'd be to have Chelsea Liz," thought Flatfoot Hawkins. "With her standin' guard a man could sleep warm inside."

But Chelsea Liz was busy, very busy, elsewhere, as Flatfoot was to learn.

With morning came another blundering if well meant attack upon the jam. Again Flatfoot Hawkins found that while you can muddle through many things, a log jam requires a bit of skill and experience, to boot.

The noon sun was overhead when a small man, clad in mackinaw coat, felt hat and rubber boots, a pink faced chubby old fellow with mutton chop whiskers, came floundering up the river trail, now half snow, half muck.

Flatfoot saw him come. The small man, at sight of the jam, stopped.

"Looks the sort might know this business," Flatfoot thought as he advanced to meet him.

"Who the —— may you be?" the small man beat the air with clenched fists, cursing volubly.

"Just the man that's carryin' this rifle," Flatfoot jammed the muzzle of the gun into the small man's stomach.

"You are, eh? You are?" The small newcomer eyed him with disapproval. He did not seem greatly scared of that rifle, Flatfoot thought.

"And what, by the gods of Tall Timber, may you be doing with this jam?" asked the newcomer irately.

"One more bleat and I'll knock off work to do some buryin'," Flatfoot admonished. "You speak sensible. I'm breaking this jam."

"Like —— you are. Where's Waldo Wiggins?"

"Drunk and disorderly," Flatfoot informed Whitewhiskers. "None o' your business, is it, where he is? Unless you're maybe another —— lumberjack. You may be in that line yourself."

"Me in that line? Me know anything about lumbering? I'll show you, by the gods of Tall—"

"Stop gabbling. You got a job," Flatfoot removed the rifle, swung about. "Here's me that don't know pine from spruce. Here's a dirty dozen o' bohunks, and here's a jam to shift. All we want to fill out the picture is a bit o' information. What's the key log and where is it?"

"The key log? The key log?" The small man fairly danced with impatience. "He's driving a river and he asks *what* a key log is. He's busting a jam and he wants to find out *where* the key log is. He's a correspondence course lumberman and he's met a practical problem. You may mean well, you long built idiot, but—"

"Cut the capering, Jimmy-Jump-Up; you point out that key log and we'll shift it." Flatfoot swung about again. "You're hired by John Payne though he don't know it. What may your name be. I'll have

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rders to give you and I got to call you omething."

The little man looked Flatfoot over more losely. A ghost of a smile crept over his ace. He came to a decision.

"You've given me a name, boss," said he, 'Call me Jimmy-Jump-Up." And he tepped out on the massed timbers of the g-jam.

They towered a good ten feet. The water, acked up above its accustomed level, hrummed through every crevice in the pile. But the logs held firm.

"A —— of a mess," was the small man's pinion after a long and careful scrutiny. 'It'll take guts to break it—aye, and skill s well." He pointed to the big log that ad first swung across between rock and ock. "See that fellow?" he asked.

"THAT big lad. The key, is it?" Flatfoot asked.

"Not by a jugful. Not so simple as that." The little man peered down into the foaming water between the logs. "There's a small stick upended just like a gun trigger. Snake that out and the big one'll roll over the rocks. Then the jam will go."

"You don't say so. Simple like that," Flatfoot cast an eye over the tangle. He himself seemed to have tried every log but the right one.

"Simple for a fish but —— for humans." The little man came shoreward again. "You've never seen a jam bust, I take it, and what it can do to man-flesh. Me, I have. It'll take guts to bust that jam. And this mob isn't long on that commodity, I'd judge."

"A man can try his hand," Flatfoot said simply. "What'll I pry the log loose with? One of them crochet hooks?"

"Crochet hooks? You mean a peavy? Better try prayer, it's safer, though pole and peavy's the proper tools." Jimmy-Jump-Up gave the jam another examination. "Yes, you'll catch —— either way. If it breaks easy the man out there at the key'll likely be caught and mashed. If it don't break simple you'll have to get dynamite and blow it and by then the water'll have dropped. Hey, you fool, where are you going?"

"I'm going to have a try," Flatfoot said, starting out over the rocks below the towering head of the jam.

"Wait a minute. Wait a minute." Jimmy-Jump-Up shed his mackinaw. "A green hand you may be, but by the gods of Tall Timber, you're a man. Wait a minute, no man can go where I dassn't without me tagging along," he explained, arming for the fray. "Now easy does it, and keep an eye on those logs above us. If one shifts a hair jump for shore and pray you get there."

The key log was, fortunately, not far out. They thrust their peavies down, came to grips with it, heaved easily.

"Nothing stirring," cried Jimmy-Jump-Up, cocking his head and looking things over. "Give it her a bit harder, lad, and—Hey! Jump, you danged fool, jump! She's a-coming."

For Flatfoot had obeyed too speedily. He had thrust at the small key log with all his strength. Delicately balanced, it had teetered for an instant, then had slid sideways across its bigger fellow. The jam started to go to pieces like a house of cards. As if by magic, logs a hundred feet upstream groaned and shivered. And the towering wall of timbers close at hand slowly began to move, gathering speed as they came.

Little Jimmy-Jump-Up had leaped toward shore, was scrambling up the rocks. He had stayed to pass the warning. A man could be expected to do no more in the face of a breaking jam. And if the big boob there, clutching his peavy preferred to invite certain death by standing and gawking at impending destruction, that was his affair.

Flatfoot's frozen inactivity was but a matter of seconds. The sudden success that had crowned his efforts dazed him. And now the toppling logs gathered speed. The big stick that had started all the trouble rode over the rocks, now that the trigger-like key log was gone. Flatfoot tried to leap it, lest it knock his feet from under him. He rose with a mighty effort, but his feet just topped the log and he rested there for one momentous second, balanced on one end of that big stick. And then, as the bohunks on the bank watched, fascinated; as old Jimmy-Jump-Up, wise in the ways of log jams covered his eyes; as death hurtled down on Flatfoot Hawkins, a mass of timber smote the other end of that log. The log up-ended swiftly under that stupendous blow. Another fool's miracle had intervened. Like the arm of a giant catapult it

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rose, projecting Flatfoot Hawkins and his peavy into the air. Like a bird, he covered the fifteen feet between him and the shore. Like a bird he soared over the heads of the watchers on the bank. But there was nothing birdlike in the way Flatfoot alighted. When he had clawed himself out of the spruce tree that broke his fall, the river was running timber, from bank to bank. Old Jimmy-Jump-Up, in command of the bohunks, was hazing them along, keeping those logs in motion.

"RIVER'S full o' logs. Guess Providence must have stepped in," Old Bill Stevens, three days later, came staggering in, thoroughly tired, from End of Steel, and paused on the threshold of Danby's Stoppin' Place to watch the tail of the drive go by.

"Got a new drive-boss. Two of 'em, to speak strict truth," Danby informed him. "That there Waldo bird has flew."

"They'd need a new boss," Bill agreed.

"But what's happened to you?" Danby looked the old man over. "You went out o' here to End of Steel the other day breathing fire and murder. And back you come like meek Moses his own self in the flesh."

"I been in contac' with them worthless politicians. I played 'em as they laid and when it was over I had a busted flush. I wired that Member o' Parleyment, like I said I would. Told him I'd voted right—for him. Told him about the jam and how it spoiled my neck o' woods, likewise how he should have a law made to shift it. Sent him this telegram collect, and this, this here is what I get back from the skunk. He ain't got no feelings."

He fumbled in his pockets for a moment and produced a crumpled yellow sheet.

Danby deciphered the message:

Am a politician, not a magician. Work your own miracles. Was elected by acclamation, anyway, you old fourflusher.

"So much for them that rules us," said old Bill Stevens bitterly. "Well, if I ain't worked said miracle, somebody has."

"I'll show you another miracle just as good. You come inside," Danby offered.

Together they entered the Stoppin' Place.

Half an hour later Flatfoot Hawkins, river boss, stumbled wearily up toward the Stoppin' Place. They had no wanigan on this two by four drive and Billybedamn, the half drunk cook, was the author of the worst grub Flatfoot had ever eaten. So he figured he'd let Billybedamn feed the bohunks at the cook tent half a mile downstream, while he would take Jimmy-Jump-Up and seek real chow at Danby's.

Inside the Stoppin' Place he found old Bill and Danby laughing together.

" 'Nother surprize for ye, Bill," Danby laughed. "Meet the man that broke the jam, Flatfoot Hawkins."

"Do tell," Bill goggled at his tall partner. "Him? Flatfoot? He broke it?"

"Jimmy-Jump-Up here's the one," said Flatfoot, disclaiming the honor.

"Like the —— I am. By the gods of all Big Timber, Flatfoot Hawkins, you're the boss of this man's river, you are."

"Then who may you be, Whiskery Jimmy?" Old Bill Stevens asked with more curiosity than politeness.

"I'm just poor doddering old John Payne that owns the logs," said Jimmy-Jump-Up. "A teamster from up here gave me an earful. I hotfooted up to fire a man, stayed to hire one that I found on the job, and in fact—" his eyes twinkled—"I got hired myself."

" 'Struth," Flatfoot chuckled. "And me, I talked right up, didn't I."

"Never you mind explainin' how ye done it," Old Bill Stevens broke in, "Flatfoot, I got to eat dirt. I said you wasn't adaptable, didn't I? I takes it back. You've adapted yourself into a lumberman. I said you couldn't shape yourself to fit cases as they riz. And look what you done, making me a liar."

"I'm proud to hear you say so," Flatfoot blushed.

"Oh it ain't only you, it's as much the work of that other immigrant, your bulldog, Chelsea Liz." Bill stepped toward the stove. "You come see the best bit of adapting you ever laid eyes on, Flatfoot."

Flatfoot obeyed. He stepped around the stove and found himself looking down on a soap box entirely filled with dog—Chelsea Liz, a trifle thin, and seven peculiar pups.

"Adaptable? I'll say she is," Old Bill laughed. "You might call 'em bow-legged collies built special to walk around stumps, or mebbe they're fur-bearin' bulldogs suitable for this here cold climate, but they're sure adapted to the country, and half native as well, Flatfoot Hawkins, which same, by glory, applies to you."

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HOW IT FEELS TO BE WOUNDED

by Leonard H. Nason

THE following applies to injuries received in battle and not in private shooting affairs. No two men seem to agree on the actual sensation they received when they were struck by a projectile. Some said they felt a sudden numbness, one man shot in the head declared that everything turned white, another one hit almost in the same spot said he thought a china plate had been broken on his head. They all agreed, however, that they felt no pain for some time after the impact.

A number of men were sitting under a bridge at Chery, a suburb of Château Thierry, one night, smoking cigarets.

"Hey! Look out with that butt!" cried one suddenly. "You burnt my arm!" The man next him denied any such action.

"Yuh did too," said the burnt man, "I c'n feel the hole in my sleeve." Two or three minutes later the same man leaped to his feet and made a wild haymaker swing at his next neighbor, which missed its mark in the darkness. The bellicose one then fell to the ground with much clattering of equipment.

A hasty examination with a flashlight showed that he had been hit twice, once in the fore arm and, the second time, through both legs above the knee. Some sniper across the river must have seen the glow of the cigarets on the arches of the bridge, and fired blindly. The wounded man had happened to be in the one place that was open to fire from hostile territory.

"It felt just like a hot cigaret butt," he declared while his wounds were being dressed.

A soldier had both legs taken off and was rendered unconscious by the explosion of a shell between Richecourt and the Mont Sec-Nonsard road fork. He recovered his senses just before the ambulance went out, and begged the ambulance orderly to shove him tarther back in the ambulance, as his legs, hanging over the edge the way they did, were very cold and uncomfortable.

Some men know immediately when they are hit, others are wounded and have no knowledge of it until some one calls their attention to it. Some drop immediately; others get up and stagger on until overcome by weakness, and then they sag to the ground.

All wounded men do one thing, at least as far as the writer has observed or been informed, immediately, when they discover they have been hit. They throw away their rifle, pack, helmet, overcoat, and everything else that they can detach from their person. They then wait patiently for the first medical corps man they see to dress their wound and then give them a ticket.

On the ticket would be written the location of the wound, the man's organization, the date, hour, and treatment rendered. This would save the wounded man from being picked up as a straggler, and would show those, into whose care he was put next, what had been done for him. If he were able to walk, he walked until he could get a truck. If not, the wounded man would wait until some stretcher bearers or prisoners, on their way to the rear, could pick him up and carry him.

Men carrying up rations or stringing telephone wire, or artillery going into position would find a great splash of blood on the leaves. At one side would be a rifle, at the other a pack and, perhaps, a few bits of bandage.

"Some guy got his," they would remark. "Well, good luck to him."

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MOORISH GOLD

A Complete Novelette

by George E. Holt

Author of "The Hand of Allah," "Shields of Islam," etc.

MORTON STARR, editor of a most popular magazine, sat in his mahogany-furnished office on the sixteenth floor of a New York skyscraper, gazed through horn-rimmed spectacles at the gray granite wall of a building across the street, yawned and rubbed the spot on top of his head where the hair was becoming thin. Then he arose nervously, lighted a cigar, crossed the office and paused before a map of the world hanging upon the wall. From spot to spot upon the map his eyes traveled, and with each jump new faces, brown or black or yellow or white, rose to greet him—the faces of friends he had made about the world—slant-eyed Chinese, swarthy Spaniards, turbaned Hindus, red-fezzed Moors and brown Berbers with their black scalp-locks. At last with a shrug he turned back to his desk and threw himself into his chair.

"June again," he muttered, "and the wanderlust. Each year the same." He looked with disgust upon a pile of manuscripts on the desk. "Darn the luck!"

He slowly exhaled the smoke from his cigar, letting it linger caressingly about his face. Seen through the blue-gray haze of incense he looked very like a kindly, bland idol, or—because idols do not wear horn-rimmed spectacles—more like a Thibetan lama, perhaps. His face was roughly molded, with faint bulges of fat here and there, the skin a little yellow because his liver did not function as smoothly as his magazine, under his nose a black smear of mustache, and in one gray eye was a slight cast, the mote which by no means blinded him to the beams in other people's organs of vision.

Again the pictures swooped down upon him and he closed his eyes that he might see them better; and after a little:

"Must go somewhere," he told himself. "Been at the grind too long. Getting seedy. Might try a week or two in Newfoundland, or maybe a month—"

At that moment the gods who served those who have followed the long trail sent their message to Morton Starr. The door of his office opened and a blue-clad boy entered and laid upon his desk an envelope. Morton Starr scratched his signature in the boy's book and waved the lad away. His pencil tore open the envelope. His eyes flashed through the message. Then he leaned back to gaze with wide eyes upon the words, and, after a little, to speak them.

"Hamid is dead!"

His first enunciation of the message was in tones of surprize, as one might well be surprized when the nebulous ghost of a strenuous and forgotten past walks in upon one.

"Hamid is dead."

The second time his voice broke the silence of the room it contained more than surprize—reflection, meditation. The ghost had assumed more definite form.

And the third time the words came from his lips there was a finality about them which indicated that surprize and doubt and question had been put away and that certain unavoidable facts had been faced and

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acknowledged. The past was no longer a ghost. It had materialized now into a living, breathing thing, and Morton Starr knew that the three words upon the cable form had put an end for the time being to the routine of his life, that the one inescapable call had come to him.

By means of the mystic incantation, the three magic words, "Hamid is dead," he went back ten years and eastward three thousand miles—across the gray Atlantic to that little known, mysterious country which lies in the northwestern corner of the African continent, Morocco, whose coasts on the west welcome the great rollers of the Atlantic, on the north look down upon the Straits of Gibraltar and the lapis-lazuli of the Mediterranean, whose Mountains of the Moon supported Atlas when he held the world upon his shoulders, whose orange groves were the Gardens of Hesperides where the golden apples grew, whose civilizations for four thousand years lie one upon the other like the ancient cities of Asia Minor, and whose people—brown Berbers, white Moors, Jews, negroes and a sprinkling of all the races of the world—produce queer combinations and peculiar history.

II

TEN years before, when the doctor who had officiated at the birth of the twentieth century had scarcely left the house, five men had sat in a big corner room on the second floor of the Hotel Cavilla, in Tangier. The hotel stood at the top of a rise outside the old city walls, and beneath it spread out the *sok-el-kebir*, or great market-place—the heart of Tangier. Through the open windows of the room the hubbub of the market-place drifted lazily—the chattering of many voices, the braying of donkeys, the clattering of horses' hoofs upon the cobbles, the chants of the sweets-sellers, the beat of the minstrel's tambourine, the shrill of a distant fife, the tinkle of water-carriers' bells, the deep hum of a thousand people engaged in buying and selling—and from the north window looking down towards the Place of the Three Gates, one could see the milling white and brown figures in the *sok*, the little eddies caused by the passage of beasts of burden, or a rider, a congestion around the little cube of Sidi Makfee's tomb, praying for rain, and beyond the gates the old mosque-crowned, opalescent city lying upon its hill.

Four young men and one whose beard and hair were gray sat around a big table, all in different postures of rest in their wicker easy chairs, but all alike in two things: each one smoked a cigaret and each one held a tall, thin glass, the contents of which were clearly indicated by the bottles of whisky and the siphons of soda which waited expectantly upon the table for further assaults. . . .

The man with the gray Vandyke and gray hair was speaking; manifestly there had been a discussion of a matter of importance and he was acting as master of ceremonies.

"We are agreed then, I take it," he observed. "But to my mind our decision should be—hm!—rendered in a more formal manner."

Bright gray eyes looked from one to another from beneath gray eyebrows. The speaker's face glowed warmly. The Scotch of forty years had written its signature in fine purple tracery upon his nose. Coventry Stewart, sometime his Britannic Majesty's consul in Mazagan, had never been drunk in his life—and had not been completely sober for twenty years.

"I take it we are agreed," he repeated. "But in view of the fact that we are dealing with the future—how much of the future none of us can say—would it not—hm!—be better for each of us to say what he has to say, to go on record, individually, as it were?"

He drew upon his glass, and the four others imitated his action. Then, noting the nods of approval of his suggestion he spoke again, turning his head now to the young man who sat upon his right.

"You, Zollern?" he questioned.

Fritz Zollern, slender, lithe and laughing, answered promptly. He raised his right hand and smiled.

"I swear solemnly," he said, "wherever I am or whatever I am doing, if I am still alive."

His words gave a keynote to the others.

"You, Bell?" asked Coventry Stewart.

"If I am alive," answered Drummond Bell, the artist.

"Lane?"

"If I am alive," came in answer from a lean, tanned, sharp-featured man.

"And you, Starr?"

The editor in the chair opened his eyes,

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sat up and looked around. Then sank back again. No one had called him—but across the ten years the voice of Coventry Stewart, uttering his name, had seemed to echo in the mahogany office.

"I also, if I live," the young man had answered, raising his glass as a pledge. There was no bald spot on the top of his head, and he wore no spectacles. Otherwise his appearance differed little from that of the maker of magazines who now dreamed of days long dead.

Coventry Stewart rose then and raised his glass. The others followed the move.

"And I, also, then pledge myself," said Stewart, "in most excellent Scotch. And I also drink to the time when our pledges shall again bring us together. A year, or ten years—who knows? But in the meantime, good luck and success to you all. *Sahal*"

"*Sahal*" echoed the four others and drained their glasses.

Thus the pledge had been given between five men; and because he was eldest and because he alone of the five had permanent residence in Morocco, Coventry Stewart became the head of the enterprise, as he had been for six months head of the Kipling Club, this gathering of the five almost every afternoon to drink good liquor, to discuss the march of affairs in Morocco and elsewhere, to analyze the motives of men in power, to tell tales of surprizing vigor, and, when the liquid pressure had become high enough, to declaim those things of R. K.'s which make red blood speed madly.

You have heard the beat of the off-shore wind,
And the thresh of the deep-sea rain;
You have heard the song—how long! how long!
Pull out on the trail again!

'Ha' done with the Tents of Shem, dear lass . . .

MORTON STARR opened his eyes and rose from his chair to pace forth and back across the verdant rug. Years since he had thought of that vibrant thing! But now across a decade of the past it came to him audibly. He could hear every one of the five voices, the taste of Scotch whisky was in his mouth, the odor of English cigarets in his nose, and the rumble of a passing dray changed into the deep hum of the market-place.

"It's north you may run to the rime-ringed sun
Or south to the blind Horn's hate—"

He heard the deep diapason of Coventry Stewart's voice, the tenor of "Drum an' Bells," the little artist—heard his own voice booming:

"Or East all the way into Mississippi Bay,
Or West to the Golden Gate;
Where the blindest bluffs hold good, dear lass,
And the wildest tales are true. . . ."

Morocco—Tangier—ten years before.

Nervously he reseated himself, then again stared at the cablegram. Marvelous how many thoughts and emotions three words could mother.

With an effort he forced himself to the business of this matter. It had been decided at this same meeting of the Kipling Club, the picture of which had been unreeling before his inner eye, that Coventry Stewart, the Englishman, should communicate when the time came with whichever one of the four he could most conveniently gain contact with. Starr and he had kept in touch for the first three or four years. Then their letters had become more widely spaced, until at last they had ceased altogether. For four years there had been no word from the Englishman, except for a Christmas greeting two years before to which Starr had replied. And it had been arranged that whoever should receive the message from Coventry Stewart should transmit it to all the others. This was the first move to be made. Starr scratched his head in perplexity. Where were the others? He knew of one of them only—Drummond Bell, the little artist, who lived in New York City. He had not seen him for half a dozen years, but he had noted his name in a recent newspaper as one of the exhibitors at some art show—what was it?—the Salamagundi Club, that was it. No doubt a message to the club would reach him. He consulted the telephone directory, and called the club. He ascertained that Bell was a member and that a message would reach him quickly if sent to the secretary. Or should Bell call him up? Wherefore Starr left his name and 'phone number.

Remained "Texas" Lane and Fritz Zollern. He wondered where they were, but he had no idea. Tex Lane had written him—how long ago?—must be six or seven years—that he had bought a ranch down in Mexico. Was it Mexico? No, Baja, California. Well, that was Mexico. But since then he had heard no word. And as

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for Fritz Zollern, Fritz and he had never been excessively congenial toward each other even in Tangier. Fritz always talked too much, was too egoistic, to suit him. He had never heard from him and had never tried to communicate with him. Well, maybe Drummond Bell would know where the others were.

And now his thoughts, going over an old adventure, took another direction, dealt with the cause, the *raison d'être*, of this business.

III

THE five of them one day had ridden forth on a journey to Pharaoh's Castle—the old brick city of El K'sar Kebir, far inland from Tangier. Revolution was in the Moroccan air, and the governor, or *basha*, of El K'sar was thought deeply concerned in it. Wherefore the five had desired to visit the city to see what was going on.

There was a reason for this curiosity. Coventry Stewart was the Moroccan representative of the *London Daily Express*. Starr had given up his job as reporter on a Chicago newspaper to try his luck as free-lance writer, and the landing of a contract from a magazine for a series of a dozen articles on Morocco had taken him to that country. Tex Lane, a former first lieutenant of Uncle Sam at Fort Leavenworth, and later a private in that greater regiment captained by Fortune, had tied up with a New York newspaper for whatever exciting stuff he could dig up. And Drummond Bell, having gone quite mad over the color of Tangier, and especially of the elusive tints of the shadows, had desired to see the sun-baked desert town of El K'sar Kebir—what tone would shadows have upon brown brick walls and long-broiled earth? And as for Fritz Zollern, who was then spending in riotous living a little money he had inherited, he had an innate curiosity concerning almost everything.

They had gone, then, to El K'sar Kebir, but only one thing of interest had developed. The governor was gone to Fez whither his Majesty the Sultan had summoned him; "Drum an' Bells" wasted tubes of color in an attempt to reproduce the shadows on the city wall; Starr had made observations on the city and its life for a magazine article; and the undercurrent of revolution was strong but elusive. But there had been no adventure, until the day they started on their return to Tangier.

On that day, as they turned the road around the corner of a hill they saw a white-clad Moor upon his horse suddenly attacked by a band of half a dozen native ruffians. They rode swiftly, but before they reached him they saw him pulled from his horse to the ground. He regained his feet and drew a *kumiah* from his belt—the long curved knife of the Moors. But six other knives surrounded him. He whirled, beating them off; then with a shout the Americans and Coventry Stewart had ridden up with revolvers drawn. To their amazement the ruffians failed to withdraw at once. Four of them turned to meet the newcomers, while two others continued the assault upon the white-robed Moor. Pistols spoke, and two of the natives dropped. The other two turned to look back at their companions. Obviously the death of the Moor in white *sulham* was a thing to be attained at all cost to themselves. Coventry Stewart and Tex Lane put spurs to their horses and dashed on ahead. As they did so, the Moor stumbled and fell, raising his arm as a shield against the uplifted knives. Texas Lane fired. Two shots. The two assassins toppled forward with bullets in their heads.

Explanations had followed and the deep gratitude of the Moor was expressed. Unquestionably he was a native notable, his horse and its trappings as well as his own garments betokening high position. They had ridden with him, at his request, back to El K'sar and had been entertained at dinner in his comfortable home. Thus had begun their acquaintance with Bou Hamid ibn Ali, an acquaintance which grew swiftly into friendship, and friendship into an understanding, courteous intimacy which saw Bou Hamid on more than one occasion guest at a meeting of the Kipling Club in Tangier. And finally mutual trust and affection had mothered this surprizing business which ten years later had put a three word cablegram on banker Starr's desk.

Bou Hamid had told them one afternoon as he sat and smoked cigaret after cigaret, but observing the Koranic prohibition against alcoholic liquor. He had spoken in Spanish, of which all knew enough to understand his words.

"*Tengo algo de decir*," he had begun with serious face, "I have something to say. It

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is a very secret matter," he went on. "May I have confidence in the discretion—but I know I may," he dismissed the doubt with a wave of his white hand. "In Morocco the wise man is always poor," he said. "If he is not wise, he becomes poor very shortly. I live well, but not luxuriously; nevertheless the Sultan and his officials tax me, take from me a great sum each year. However," he paused and looked from face to face sharply. Apparently he found that which he sought.

"I am a very rich man—much richer by far than they dream. I do not need to tell you again that I am grateful that you saved my life. I have no family. My parents are dead. I had no sisters. My two brothers were killed by the father of the present Sultan. I have never married, so I have no children. To be brief, I have no relative in all the world, at least no one near enough to be called relative, nor none for whom I have the slightest regard. And, as I say, I am very rich. The Sultan does not know this—no one, I think, knows it—or I should be in prison now, or a poor man stripped of my possessions. An indiscreet word from any one of you would accomplish this. I do not know just what my wealth is. "Five years ago," his black-bearded face smiled a little, "five years ago I stumbled by chance, and a kindly deed, upon a great deposit of gold. It is far in the south and well hidden, in the territory of a tribe of Shilha Berbers who do not welcome strangers to their borders." He scowled grimly. "At once I established a small grain store in Mogador, the nearest port. For five years now gold has been coming to Tangier for me in the bags of grain that my house ships to me by boat from Mogador. And from Tangier it goes, still in the bags of grain, to my house in El K'sar. And there I have been storing it year after year."

The Americans and the Englishman had looked at him with amazement, although there was nothing about his story which could not be true. That the interior of Morocco was vastly wealthy in minerals was common knowledge; also that gold existed—but almost without exception in the Atlas Mountains where fierce, untamed Berbers rendered it impossible of attainment. With some of these Berbers as his servants, Bou Hamid no doubt could have carried on this business of extracting and exporting gold without detection.

"I do not know," he continued, "the value of it. I know that I have already four chests full, each chest bigger than a sack of grain."

There had been whistles, ejaculations, words of amazement.

"Holy mackerel!" Tex Lane had exclaimed. "Give me a pencil and paper. I've handled gold." He took an envelope and pencil from his pocket and began to figure. Shortly he looked up from his figuring at Bou Hamid.

"Is it pure gold?" he asked.

"Nuggets," replied the Moor. "It is a great placer."

"Then," said Lane—"there must be—hm!—four or five millions, maybe more."

"Five mil—lions!" Coventry Stewart had breathed the three syllables in an awed whisper.

"Not so much, I think," objected Bou Hamid. "Perhaps half—oh! you mean not pounds sterling, but American dollars. Well, yes, then—perhaps two millions sterling."

"But—but—is that true? Two millions sterling: ten millions American?" Lane had asked, staring alternately at his figures and the face of Bou Hamid, but without offense in his tone.

Bou Hamid nodded slowly.

"I will show you, with pleasure, if you desire," he said, "and if you will agree to that which I am about to ask."

SILENCE for a space. Then Starr spoke:

"I don't think we—any of us—wish to see it, Bou Hamid," he said. "But—what is it that you desire?"

"This." said the Moor. "I understand you too well to think that you would accept an offer to share in this treasure—now. Otherwise, I should like to divide it."

The quick shaking of five heads showed that he had been right in his conclusion, and he smiled.

"And therefore what I desire to ask of you my friends, is this: that when my time comes, as it may any day, for I have strong enemies, you will become the possessors of this treasure."

His face grew stern and a clenched hand struck the arm of his chair while he looked from one to another of his friends.

"If you do not so promise, I shall hide the gold where it will never be found—I

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hall have it thrown into the sea. Because f you do not claim it, gain possession of it, he Sultan or his ministers will seize it. He s my enemy. They are my enemies. That s why my life hangs by a thread; that is why I ask you in the name of our friendship to ssume this obligation. Is it asking too nuch? Will you do it?"

For a little while no word was spoken. Eyes sought eyes. Coventry Stewart rose nd filled the now empty glasses, drew deeply upon his own and at last broke the silence.

"Why shouldn't we?" he asked. "Not for the gold, but because," he bowed towards Bou Hamid, "but because a friend requests." He looked in turn at the others, into serious faces. "Why not?" he repeated.

And so it had been agreed. The five of them had given their assurances, their promises, to their friend, Bou Hamid.

"You will understand," he had said then, "that I can make no arrangements for this to come into your possession, as could be done in your own country. Our laws are different. But no one save you—and one other, an old faithful slave—will know that the treasure exists. My house I can bequeath, and I shall leave it to the old slave who has been my servant for many years. He will know of your coming after I have gone. Beyond that the matter is in your hands. You will have to get the gold out of the country by force or craft. But if its existence becomes known, you will have great difficulty, great danger—Shall we say, then, that it will become the duty of Señor Stewart to notify the others?" He cast a glance of inquiry at the Englishman.

"But—but perhaps I may—er—go first," said Coventry Stewart. "I am no longer a young man."

"But you can arrange with your family for the word to be sent—no?"

"I can do that," assented Stewart. "Yes, I can do that."

"Then it is arranged, and I thank you each one," Bou Hamid held out his hand to each in turn and it was grasped with hearty, sincere force. They liked this native friend, not for the golden treasure, but for a golden heart which they had come to understand.

At first it had been unreal, this business. Then as they had lingered in Tangier and talked about it, it had become very actual. They had seen Bou Hamid many times thereafter, but no further discussion of importance had been had. The matter was arranged. Then the Club had broken up, as such groups of world travelers always do.

Ten years ago!

And now to relay the message to the others—to Tex Lane and Drum an' Bells and Fritz Zollern, wherever they might be found.

AS A result of the three-word message and the ensuing activities of banker Starr, one day a week later saw three of the four of them steaming swiftly eastward toward that northwestern corner of the African continent, which is Morocco. Three of them only, for Tex Lane was missing. Morton Starr's messages had failed to elicit response from him, but had resulted in a reunion of himself and little "Drum an' Bells" and Fritz Zollern in New York City. And the three of them had decided not to wait for Lane, but to proceed at once upon their adventure, leaving him to follow if he could and would.

As the ship pulled away from her pier the trio stood at the railing, each filled with the thoughts which such an occasion would naturally bring forth. They were returning to enchanted Morocco, after an absence of ten years, upon adventure bent.

And as they stood they offered a study to an observer of human kind: Morton Starr, the dignified, well-groomed banker, wearing the conventional raglan and steamer cap of ocean travel; Fritz Zollern, having a vague military touch in his stiff attitude beside the rail; and little Drum an' Bells, the artist, leaning negligently, his back turned upon the cheering, handkerchief waving crowd upon the wharf.

A funny little figure of a man was Drum an' Bells. Not much over five feet in height, his head was big and hairless save for a queer little curly strip of wool running from the center of his forehead across the top of his head, the rest of his cranium being bald as a pear. His upper lip was the burying ground of dead hopes: two dozen discouraged black hairs were the monument to an unborn mustache, and beneath his lower lip, in that sacred spot where a southern gentleman wears a goatee, was a blighted hirsute adornment much resembling one of the camel's-hair brushes which

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the artist used in his business. A queer head, a queer face, and a humorous one, lighted by twinkling boyish eyes of blue, and a generous mouth, by the twitching of which Drum an' Bells could express quite a large range of emotions and opinions. His clothes were not shabby, yet they were in marked contrast to Starr's immaculate dark cheviot. Soft shirt and collar and badly knotted Windsor tie, together with his weird facial decoration, would have placarded Drummond Bell as an artist of some sort almost anywhere on earth. As a matter of fact, five years in the Latin Quarter of Paris had de-Americanized him to an extent—or perhaps had cosmopolitanized him.

Fritz Zollern would have been identified, if one had spoken with him, as the son, or perhaps the grandson—not of a generation farther away—of an alien father, and one acquainted with the German Empire would not have hesitated in making his decision that this father or grandfather had been, not only a German, but a Prussian. His face and figure were not unlike the ones which were to become so familiar to the world in later years as those of the German crown prince: square face, pointed chin, with pompadoured flaxen hair, and a small blond mustache already trained to turn upward at the ends. He had a semi-military manner, carrying himself very erect, with shoulders thrown well back, walking with something of a strut. Further impression of a Heidelberg student was added by a small white scar on the ruddy cheek just below the left temple.

IV

TWO weeks later Tangier rose to greet three of them out of the gray mist in the south, which is Africa—the same Tangier they had left behind them ten years before—represented at the particular place and moment by a horde of shouting, gesticulating guides and hotel touts, showing in their garb and manners many different degrees of prosperity and self-respect, from the miserable, cross-eyed, tattered brown boy who desired only to carry their luggage, to the statuesque, richly-robed Dukali representing the big Hotel Cecil, whom silly American women invariably considered to be the realization of their exotic dreams of Arab sheiks.

The three Americans desired to put up at their old hotel, the barn-like Cavilla, bulking at the head of the great market-place, wherefore they thrust aside, roughly of necessity, the brown hands reaching for bags and suitcases, or jangling before their eyes the brass tags guaranteeing their actual connection with the hotels they represented, and demanded loudly for the courier for the Cavilla.

In the quiet which followed, came a rough shout of "*Balak! Balak!* Make way!" and the proprietor of the Cavilla, himself, thrusting his arms like a swimmer before him, made his way through the crowd. Catching sight of the three Americans he stopped, staring for a moment, and then whooped a Spanish exclamation. After noisy greetings, the proprietor looked about him and spoke words to certain of the natives, one of whom proceeded to put the Americans' baggage in a pile while the other ran off to bring donkeys for its transportation to the hotel. Led by Señor Enrique, the Americans passed along the lengthy pier, through the low white customs house surmounted by its battery of ancient guns, and up the brief thoroughfare from the *aduana* to the city gates and through the gates into the Siageen, or main street, of Tangier, lined on either side by queer little cubby-holes of shops, on the floors of which native merchants squatted selling their goods. A few steps brought them to the *soco-chico*—little market-place—a little widening in the main street, where three other cañon-like streets connected, and where very naturally the host of the Cavilla insisted that they should sit themselves down at one of the round, marble-topped tables of the Café Espanol and imbibe each what his taste prescribed.

And there for a little while they sat, sipping their drinks, viewing the clattering throng passing through the *soco-chico*, answering the inquiries of Señor Enrigue and asking as many questions as he did, and reflecting upon the events of ten years ago which had brought them here, and upon the past fortnight—the ten days at sea—the two days in Gibraltar and the three hour trip of the rattling *Djibel Dursa* which had brought them from Gibraltar to Tangier across the Straits.

In a little while the watchful eye of Señor Enrique caught sight of the Americans' baggage coming donkey-back through the

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sok, and he excused himself to accompany it to the hotel, to attend to its proper disposition and to prepare the rooms for their new occupants. Scarcely had he taken his departure when a tall man, very erect, with gray Vandyke and eyes of the same color, whom he had met and stopped to talk with a moment up the Siageen, swiftly approached the Café Español and, catching sight of the three Americans sitting before it, waved his rosewood walking-stick, to the menace of the helter-skelter of passing natives, and shouted a cheery "What ho!"

The three Americans arose to rush upon him in vociferous greeting and then to pull him into a chair at the table and to clap their hands to summon the waiter. The friendliness of their greeting manifestly was reciprocated by the more elderly man; his gray eyes gleamed, his cheek bones were touched with a flush, and his bearded lips were wide with satisfaction. Coventry Stewart was older than his companions by twenty years, but his heart was of eternal youth.

"*Saha!*" he offered, raising his glass. "To the old Kipling Club—" but there he stopped, and looked from one to the other of his friends. "Where is Lane?" he desired to know. "Didn't he come with you?"

Starr, as spokesman, shook his head.

"Couldn't connect with him," he explained, "but left word. I imagine he will come along as soon as he gets it."

"Well, here's to the Kipling Club, then," again offered Coventry Stewart, and they drank.

"But," added the Englishman, as he set his glass upon the table, "I do hope Lane will come." His face grew serious. "We are going to need every man of us in this business. It's not going to be quite so simple as Bou Hamid thought."

The three Americans gazed at him in silent question.

"Complications," he continued. "Bou Hamid died very suddenly. The basha of El K'sar took charge of affairs immediately he heard of Bou Hamid's death. The old caretaker to whom Bou Hamid willed his property had the proper documents to prove his claim, and all would have been well had it not been for an untoward incident. Bou Hamid, having some premonition of the end, had sent word to his people in the mountains and at Mogador to refrain from sending any further shipments of grain—gold, that is. Unfortunately, his death occurred very soon after the departure of the messenger, with the result that one shipment arrived after his death. The old servant—he did his best, of course—received the grain and took from the grain sacks the bags of gold hidden in them. But because of the presence of one of the basha's officers on the property, pending the issuance of title to the servant, he did not dare to deposit the gold in the secret chamber which Bou Hamid had provided. On the contrary, he concealed it where he thought it would be safe—it was not a very large shipment—but as ill luck would have it, the basha's man, snooping around, came upon it. That gold is gone. The basha's man took it to the basha. That in itself was not important, but it has raised the question in the basha's mind as to where it came from and whether there was more to be found about the property. They tore the place up pretty well, I judge, from the old servant's statements, but found no more. However, you can see that the basha is going to keep an eye on the place and that he is going to try to find out where the gold came from. Result: our work is cut out for us."

"Who," asked Drummond Bell, "is the basha?"

Coventry Stewart raised his gray eyebrows and compressed his lips before replying.

"The basha," he said, "is a scamp by the name of Abdulkhader. Were the basha an honorable man there would be a chance of making a fair deal with him concerning the gold. As he is not an honorable man, but on the contrary, very much of a scoundrel, you can figure to yourselves."

"Couldn't offer him an equal share with us in the treasure—and get away with it?" The question came from the artist.

"Not a chance in the world. Not—a—chance," negatived Coventry Stewart. "He would take it all—and want more. And incidentally I may say, as I know Abdulkhader somewhat by personal contact, and a great deal by reputation, that he would not think that the lives of five foreigners would be of the slightest importance whatsoever, if he knew what we were after. We've got to keep him from suspecting if we can. If we can not, we must make our plans Abdulkhader-proof."

Fritz Zollern shrugged his shoulders; the little artist stared at his whisky-and-soda;

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Starr stared absent-mindedly at the face of Coventry Stewart.

"To —— with Abdulkhader!" offered Zollern.

"Four of us ought to be able to beat him thinking," commented the artist.

"You are both right," agreed the Englishman. "We will get Abdulkhader if we can—he deserves it on general principles. Four of us ought to be able to gain our ends; and perhaps Lane will get here by the time we are ready to do anything. There will be plenty of reconnoitering and planning to do to keep us busy for a while."

"Do you suppose," said Starr, "that your cablegram to me could have been learned of by Abdulkhader, or by any one else who might have a curiosity concerning it?"

"No, my boy," Stewart said, with a patronizing air, "I didn't send it from Mogador, nor from Tangier. I went over to Gibraltar and filed it with the manager of the British telegraph office there, who is a friend of mine. Otherwise, I should have added another sentence telling you not to come. That was only elementary caution."

"How did Bou Hamid die?" asked Starr.

"Bou Hamid," Coventry Stewart answered slowly, "Bou Hamid died, as we say, at the hands of person or persons unknown. He was stabbed in the back as he had had a premonition he would be."

"Who did it?" asked Drummond Bell.

"I'm not sure," answered Stewart, "but my bet is on Abdulkhader. Not because Abdulkhader suspected the existence of the gold, but because Bou Hamid opposed him in his unjust taxation of the people of El K'sar. It wasn't taxation, but robbery."

"So? Well perhaps." It was Drummond Bell's small voice. "Perhaps, if we can become quite certain about this, we can—ah—adjust the matter with Abdulkhader in due course of business. It's lunch-time; let's go."

As they went across the *soco-chico*, a rotund, red-faced, round-headed man, sitting in front of the German café, watched them.

V

THE three Americans shortly found themselves reestablished in their old quarters at the Cavilla. For the moment they were boys again, reacting to thrills which come but rarely in middle age. Looking out of their north window at many-hued Tangier with its hills over and beyond the Place of the Three Gates, it seemed as if the last decade had not been: Mr. Einstein had not yet rediscovered his ancient formula, nevertheless time traveled backward, and Starr, at least, had a strange sensation of actually existing in a day ten years gone, and looking forward at the future as it had appeared during the last decade. Time and tenses were sadly mixed.

Man is to a great extent the product of his immediate environment, and the environment now was not of the present year, but of one long past; wherefore it was inevitable that the four friends found themselves casting aside the characteristics acquired since last they had been together, and reverting to the Stewart and Starr and Zollern and Bell of old. Coventry Stewart's added double handful of years was laid aside as a jacket might be discarded, and with all the jovial ceremony of old he acted as god of glass and bottle. The staid dignity of Morton Starr was succeeded by a bubbling good humor which caused him to pace about the room, rubbing the palms of his hands upon the seat of his trousers, chuckling to himself now and then, and wheeling sharply to throw a jest at one of his friends. Fritz Zollern lost the reserve natural to him, and as his stimulated blood began to tingle, he sang snatches of weird songs he had picked up on his travels. Little "Drum an' Bells" moved restlessly from window to window, and one might easily have guessed that the elusive colors of Tangier still puzzled him, although he brought to them now an eye trained by additional years of exercise.

Reminiscences shot back and forth, punctuated by "Remember—?" and it was inevitable that as the lowering barometer of bottles showed increased alcoholic pressure, one of them—surprizingly it was little "Drum an' Bells"—should leap to his feet and start the old club anthem—start it in the middle, at a point to which apparently he had been reciting it to himself silently:

"Now the Four-way Lodge is opened—now the Smokes of council rise—
Pleasant smokes, ere yet 'twixt trail and trail they choose—"

The three other voices took up the song:

"Now the girths and ropes are tested: now they pack their last supplies,
Now our young men go to dance before the Trues!"

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The feet of the young men were once more upon the trail.

A little later they put aside their exuberance and got down to the business in hand.

Naturally the question of financing the enterprise came up, but was disposed of with scarcely a dozen words.

"Share and share alike," said Drummond Bell, with a smile which indicated quite clearly that as an artist he was accustomed to being considered more or less indigent. "I'm not one who wastes his earnings in riotous living—as a rule," he said, "and I really do sell a picture occasionally."

"All right with me," said Zollern, adding—"We'd better not count Lane in until he comes; we'll split it four ways."

Wherefore, drafts or cash or checks, as the case might be, were turned over to "Drum an' Bells," who was elected treasurer, to be converted into the coin of the realm. They were in the midst of a discussion of traveling equipment when there was a knock at the door.

"*Entrez!*" called Coventry Stewart.

In response the door opened, and Mustapha, the aproned servant of the hotel, entered, followed by a brown *djellabaed* native youth, who shuffled awkwardly upon the threshold and entered only when Mustapha turned and pulled him in by the sleeve of his *djellaba*.

"This boy," Mustapha informed them, "says he has come with a message for Sidi Stewart."

"Where did he come from?" asked Stewart before he thought.

Mustapha shook his head.

"All he says is 'From there.'" He waved a hand towards the south.

"M'zien," said Stewart, recovering from his lapse from discretion. "Let him remain and I will speak with him in a moment."

Mustapha withdrew, but Stewart waited until the *swish-swish* of the servant's slippers had become inaudible down the hall before he addressed the youth—and then it was in lowered tones.

"Approach," he said to the boy, "and give your message. These are all my friends, so you may speak."

"Are they also—also the friends of Bou Hamid?" the boy asked, gazing from one face to the other, and then back to Coventry Stewart. The youth had an intelligent face, expressive brown eyes, and he seemed not so much perturbed at being in the presence of foreign strangers as worried by the message which he bore.

"They are friends of Bou Hamid, even as I," Stewart told him. "Wherefore you may speak plainly. But what is your name?"

"I am called Yusef," answered the boy, "and I am son of Hadj Abdi, who, as you know, is the servant of Bou Hamid—" quick tears sprang to the boy's eyes. "I—I am afraid—Sidi—that I no longer have a father." He did not meet the looks turned upon him, manifestly ashamed of the little weakness he had shown, and the Americans, after one glance, turned their eyes elsewhere.

"Sit, Yusef," commanded the Englishman. "Sit and tell us of the matter."

The boy, who was not more than fourteen or fifteen years old, flung a look and a word of thanks to Coventry Stewart, and squatted upon the floor, tucking the skirt of his brown *djellaba* around his browner legs.

"It is true I am tired," he said, "having ridden from El K'sar to Tangier without stop—at my father's command."

"We listen," said Stewart, and the youth began his story, rocking himself slowly backward and forward upon his crossed legs.

The Arabic droned on in a monotone almost without emphasis, but shortly the Englishman stopped it, with lifted hand, turned to his companions and summed up swiftly what the boy had said. Some of it they had understood, but not all.

"He says that yesterday the basha, Abdulkhader, came in person to the house, accompanied by two black servants, and tried to force Hadj Abdi, the boy's father, to tell him about the gold, whence it came, etc. He suspected that there was more of it about the place. Hadj Abdi denied all knowledge of it, whereupon the basha turned him over to his blacks to force him to speak. I omit many of the details; they are not pretty. If I ever get hold of Abdulkhader, I may forget that I am an Englishman."

There was that in his face as he spoke which showed that his words were not lightly spoken.

"They tortured the old man. First they pulled his beard out hair by hair, but when that brought no results they proceeded to more painful measures. They—" he hesitated, "well, let us say they mutilated him.

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And when that failed of its purpose also, they sewed him up in a raw cow-hide—and put him in the sun."

Starr and Drummond Bell sprang to their feet and began to pace about the room, cursing Abdulkhader with language unrestrained. Fritz Zollern retained his seat and his silence, but his face was unpleasant to look upon. Drum an' Bells wheeled suddenly, approached the Englishman and shook his long, slender, white finger in his bearded face.

"If you don't forget you are an Englishman," he said, "I will take the job off your hands! Why, —— it! I'll shoot Abdulkhader on sight, the ——!" His characterization of the basha of El K'sar was lurid and surprizingly accurate, coming from one who did not intimately know his Excellency.

"When was this that he was sewed up in the hide?" Starr, no less agitated, demanded to know.

"This morning," Stewart answered, and questioned the boy again. "He has been on the road since nine o'clock this morning." He glanced at his watch. "It is now six. He says that after his father was sewed up and placed in the sun he managed to get to him unobserved, and his father bade him ride at once to Tangier and find me. You see I had sent word to Hadj Abdi," he explained, "after I arrived here."

"Will Hadj Abdi—will that kill him today?" Drummond Bell threw the inquiry over his shoulder as he walked.

"No," Coventry Stewart replied, "one day will not kill him. He might even survive two days, but I don't think so. He is an old man." Again he questioned the boy. "Did your father say how long he thought he could—" he hesitated, not wanting to hurt the boy. But the youth guessed the question.

"Tomorrow at this hour he will be dead," he answered, "so he said to me. Therefore I ride back to El K'sar tonight, although—" his shoulders drooped, and again his eyes filled with tears—"although there is nothing I can do," he concluded. "Oh, Sidi, can you not—can you not—help him?"

Drummond Bell's ears caught the pleading in the voice.

"What's he say?" he demanded, stopping in his stride.

"He wants to know if I cannot help his father," explained the Englishman.

And again little Drum an' Bells, the artist, surprized his friends. He confronted the boy and, accenting his words with swinging arm, he shouted:

"Yes! Yes! Yes!" and again, after a pause, during which his eyes held the boy's, "*Aiwa!*" Then he turned to his fellow adventurers.

"Let's get busy," he cried. "Where can we get decent horses?" he demanded of Stewart. "Can you arrange that?"

"I will send for my man. I told him to stay in the shop until I gave him permission to leave." Stewart addressed the boy, Yusef.

"Go to the shop on the main street, the third this side of the mosque, and tell the man therein, whose name is Zaudi, to come here at once. You understand? The third shop this side of the mosque—and his name is Zaudi."

The boy nodded comprehension.

"Go then, speedily."

Yusef rose and went, his face clearing. Although he did not understand what the little man with the queer face had said, he was quite able to recognize the fact that action was planned.

As the door closed behind him Drummond Bell, having dumped the contents of his traveling bag upon the floor, and now engaged in selecting certain articles, flung out:

"We can make El K'sar by morning, surely, but we want to get started right now. I—" he rose and faced his friends with a frown—"I guess it sounds as though I were commander of this expedition. I'm not, of course, but—but—why ——! we can't sit here doing nothing when Hadj Abdi is being tortured because he won't tell about the gold—*our* gold!"

His words were met with a chorus of replies, the meanings of which were all the same. They had been, all of them, surprised at the little artist's self-assertion; it seemed as though there was in him a force that none of them had suspected. And it occurred to none of them to criticize his course of action.

"We can have horses in an hour at most," submitted Coventry Stewart.

"And we certainly should be able to get ourselves ready in that time," added Starr. "We'll have to ride light in order to make time, so there won't be much baggage to bother with."

"Just what each one can take on his own

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horse, I think," said Stewart. "And don't forget your pistols and plenty of ammunition. I'm going to get ready myself now—and give the necessary orders to my man when he comes. Shall we say in an hour?"

"An hour at most," snapped the artist. "Less if we can make it. We will join you in your quarters."

It was less than an hour when they swung into saddle, and followed by the boy Yusef, set out southward over the hills in the gathering dusk.

VI

HIS Excellency, Sid Abdulkhader, stood in the patio of the house which had belonged to Bou Hamid, and looked down upon a curious bundle upon the hot ground at his feet. It was midday and the sun beat down so fiercely that even the basha, accustomed to the suns of interior Morocco, squinted his narrow evil eyes more than he would have squinted them normally in looking at such an object. So he remained for a space staring in silence at the strangely shaped object—an object which had a man's head, but an armless, legless trunk of warped raw-hide. The head was that of an old man, manifestly partly of negro blood. Although the skin of the drawn face was dark, the distorted features were not the coarsely modelled features of a negro, but the more delicately fashioned ones of the Moroccan Berber. The lips, twisted in pain, were thin, the scant white hair and beard were straight.

His Excellency, the basha, noted the enlargement of the neck from the pressure of the hide upon the body, the swollen veins and the bulging eye-balls, and reflected that the effects of this form of torture were less in the case of a skinny bloodless ancient than in the case of a full-blooded younger person: pressure upon a full wine skin produces much greater results than pressure upon a partially filled one, he reflected. He waited in malicious patience until the bundle upon the ground heaved a little with sudden pain, until a groan of agony escaped from lips like brown ash, until the venerable head turned in anguish from side to side. Then he spoke—

"Soon it will be impossible for you to speak," his voice penetrated the mist of pain and Hadj Abdi opened his eyes to look at this man who had ordered the torture of his body and spirit.

"*Wa hamdulillah!*" he gasped. "Thank Allah for that." His pain stricken eyes met the glare of the basha valiantly.

"You will not speak, dog?" growled His Excellency.

Hadj Abdi's eyes gave him the answer. The basha's round, slightly bearded face grew red with a sudden rush of blood, as though his own body were suddenly constricted by a warping rawhide. Anger flamed.

"Son of uncountable black dogs!" he screamed. "The gold, I tell you! The gold! Whence came it? Speak!"

He lifted a flat, slippered foot and brought it down with vicious force upon the rawhide covered body at his feet. A shriek of pain came from the lips of Hadj Abdi, his head raised from the ground as if to view the source of the unutterable agony and then fell back limply. The basha glared for a moment in satisfaction, which changed then to anger and defeat. He bent over to view more closely the face of Hadj Abdi; there was no respiration, no flicker of the eyelids, and a gray color that crept over the brown skin of the face touched the cheek bones like frost. The basha straightened and cursed.

"Dead," he growled. "The dog died too easily. And he did not speak! The curses of Allah upon him! May he roast in *El Hotama*——"

His pleasant reflections were cut short by a mounted courier who dashed up.

"There awaits you in your office, O, Sidi," said the courier, "a Christian who bears a letter to you from *El Naib* in Tangier, and who requests immediate audience."

"A letter from the sultan's commissioner? *Schoon hua?*" questioned the basha. "Who is he?"

But the courier had not been given the name of the foreigner who demanded audience with his Excellency. However, a letter from the *Naib* in Tangier, the venerable and powerful Hadj Mohamed Torres, was no more to be ignored or treated with discourtesy than a command from the sultan himself. The *Naib* made bashas and viziers, and also unmade them—sometimes with startling and disastrous unexpectedness. Abdulkhader's lifted hand brought a slave with his horse. Turning then to

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four of his negro guards who stood at attention, awaiting his orders, he pointed to the rawhide wrapped bundle lying upon the blazing stones of the courtyard.

"The fellow is dead," he said. "Throw him outside the city wall." He rode off, followed by his courier.

In obedience to their master's commands the four negroes threw Hadj Abdi upon the pack-saddle borne by a little burro which had been tethered outside, and lashed it on.

"Go you with the wood,*" said one of the guards, laughing. "I will remain here. I have an ulcer on my ankle and do not care for walking."

He squatted upon his haunches in a shady corner of the patio and grinned after his three fellows as they accompanied the burro and its burden through the patio gate.

But a little while had they been gone when a youthful brown face peeked cautiously around the corner of the gateway and surveyed the patio. The squatting guard he did not see. After a moment's hesitation he entered the courtyard in search of the thing he had left there upon the stones the day before. It was gone, but the boy Yusef started to make a search of the house, hurriedly, for he had promised to reconnoiter and swiftly rejoin his American friends who waited a little distance down the street. As he turned the corner a black figure arose and seized him by the shoulder of his *djellaba*. With movements as quick as those of a frightened rabbit Yusef ducked and squirmed and peeled his *djellaba* off over his head, leaving that garment in the hand of the open-mouthed guard.

"Where is my father?" demanded the half-nude boy, prepared to run away swiftly if the occasion demanded. "Where is my father? What have you done with him?"

"Who is your father, brat?" asked the guard.

"Hadj Abdi," cried the boy. "Hadj Abdi. What have you done with him?"

The guard made a careless gesture with his thumb towards the patio gate, then grinned maliciously.

"Hadj Abdi, your father, recently rode forth through the gate upon a burro," he said, and, as an after-thought—"with three followers."

"Then he lives! He lives!" cried the boy, his face illumined. "Where was he bound? He lives! He lives!"

*The bier.

Again the stupid but malicious negro spoke.

"It may be that he lives," he said, "but if so, he did not show it. And as to where he is bound, it was the basha's orders to throw him outside the city wall. Probably the crows or vultures are now pecking at his eyes."

Yusef gazed in horror at the grinning black.

"You mean—you mean" he stammered, "he is *dead?* Tell me! Tell me!" In his excitement the boy had approached and now, forgetting fear, laid a pleading hand upon the negro's arm.

"What question can there be concerning that?" growled the negro. "Did he not lie during two suns wrapped in a *sulham* of hide? Besides which did not his Excellency, the basha, in anger stamp upon his belly?" His tones suddenly dropped and grew angrier. "Your questions disturb me, brat. If you desire to see your father—" a big black hand caught Yusef on the side of the head and sent him spinning to the earth—"go find him!"

As the boy struggled to his feet, holding his hand to a bruised cheek, he stiffened and stared, not at the guard, but at his three American friends, who had entered the gate behind the guard, just in time to observe this scene. The guard, catching the look, turned to see what was behind him—turned, and received upon the point of his jaw a fist backed by the arm, anger and ability of Morton Starr. The blow drove his head back and spun him around, but he was too big a beast to be knocked out in this way. He swung about, drawing his knife as he did so, and with a hoarse cry leapt towards the Americans. It was little Drum an' Bells that finished the incident. As Starr had struck, the artist had drawn his pistol and now, taking deliberate aim, fired. His bullet, as was intended, caught the black in the right shoulder. As the guard stopped his rush and clapped a hand to the spot where the .38 bullet had gone through, the artist fired again, and this time at the left arm. With arms hanging impotently at his sides, the negro stood glaring at them with open mouth and wide eyes. His knife clattered from his paralyzed hand onto the cobblestones. Then he turned and staggered to a corner of the patio where he sank into a shapeless huddle.

"That," commented Drum an' Bells, "will hold him for a while, I think. It will

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e quite some time before he slams another id."

Starr had called Yusef to him, and they ow learned of the fate of Hadj Adbi.

"And," said the boy, when he had told hem, "I must go now to find him. I must ot leave him lying outside the city wall."

"Assuredly not," affirmed Starr. "But ve also shall go with you to make search. First, however, I think we must take care of his guard. His wounds must be attended o, but I don't like to leave him here. We hould hide him somewhere—somewhere vhere the basha won't find him."

In such Arabic as was at his command Starr explained this to Yusef. The boy nodded his head in understanding.

"My father has a little house outside the city wall," he said, "on land where we raise grain. We could leave the black there perhaps. There lives my father's cousin, who can care for him, and guard him if it is so desired."

"Fine," agreed Zollern and the artist. "Fine, if we can get him there without trouble."

The boy Yusef guessed their thoughts.

"He will go with us, I think. He is frightened. And if you tell him that you will shoot him again, I think he will not make trouble. I will tell him." He looked to Starr for permission.

"All right," said Starr. "See what he says."

The boy crossed the patio and addressed quick sharp words to the groaning guard, who nodded his head at last and rose.

"He says the basha will kill him if he goes with us," explained the boy. "But I told him that he will die from his wounds if he does not go."

"Tell him also," said Starr, "that he will assuredly die if he does not go—but more speedily than from the wounds he already has."

This thought having been conveyed to him through the lips of Yusef, the big black nodded sullenl agreement, and started towards the gate. The others fell in behind him and thus they made their way from the patio of the house of Bou Hamid.

IT WAS but a little way to the city gate and through this they passed without undue notice from the guard on duty; the negro knew that behind him were pistols backed by men who did not fear to shoot, and he valued his life, in spite of two injured shoulders. Swiftly they followed the deserted road away from town and soon came to the little stone hut which Yusef pointed out. Finding there Hadj Abdi's cousin of whom the boy had spoken, they explained the matter as quickly as might be and, having the cousin's promise that the guard's wounds would be attended to and that he would not be permitted to leave the house, they returned to the city wall on their mission to find the hide-wrapped body of Hadj Abdi. But although they circled the entire city twice, although Yusef asked of beggars sitting along the wall, and of passers-by upon the road, they were unable to find what they sought, nor any trace of it. Some had seen the black guards pass with the body on the burro, but no one could be found who had seen its destination. And finally they were forced to admit defeat. The body of Hadj Abdi had disappeared.

"Perhaps the guards buried it," Fritz Zollern suggested, but this probability was rejected by Yusef. It was not the custom. But another suggestion, this time from Starr met with more encouragement.

"The three guards," he offered, "who took the body from the city, will no doubt return in due time to the house of Bou Hamid. From them we might learn something."

Consoling Yusef as best they could, they made their way back to the city to meet at an appointed place their English friend, Coventry Stewart, who had assumed the task of engaging the attention of the basha while the others should attempt the rescue of Hadj Abdi.

VII

BUT although they waited several hours for Coventry Stewart, who should have been waiting for them, the Englishman did not turn up, and finally, growing alarmed, Starr suggested that they should go forth to seek news of him.

They could see no reason to suppose that tales of the occurrences at Bou Hamid's house could have reached the basha's ears until a considerable time after Stewart should have left the basha—until, that is, the negro guards who had disposed of the body of Hadj Abdi returned to Bou Hamid's house, and there had become alarmed

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at the absence of their fellow guard. Coventry Stewart, they knew, was quite able to care for himself in this country in which he had lived for thirty years, although to every one, no matter how capable, there may come the occasion when he finds himself at a disadvantage. That Abdulkhader was utterly unscrupulous could be taken for granted, but none of them could perceive how he would have, as yet, any reason for suspecting the Englishman's real business or of having any excuse for interfering in his affairs.

Still they were worried, a condition which was added to, no doubt, by that which had occurred to Hadj Abdi, and by the inexplicable disappearance of his body. Although they knew that the treasure was in the house of Bou Hamid, none of them, not even Coventry Stewart, knew exactly where it was located, how it was hidden. That it was well concealed was manifest from the failure of the basha and his men to come upon it in their search of the house. Now Hadj Abdi, who knew the secret, was gone; Coventry Stewart, who, they suspected, had at least a definite suspicion of the manner in which such treasure could be hidden, had failed to return from his visit to Abdulkhader.

"I don't like it," Drummond Bell announced. "Not one little bit do I like it. I've got a hunch that something's gone wrong, that there's something doing that we don't know anything about. Hadj Abdi's body should be lying outside the city wall. Ordinarily no one would think of touching it. Isn't that true?"

"Perfectly true," agreed Starr. "Perfectly true. It's darn queer."

"Well then," continued the artist, "if the body should be there and isn't—and we know it isn't—there must be an unusual set of circumstances to explain the matter. That's logical. And then Stewart's not showing up—"

"Perhaps Stewart found Hadj Abdi," offered Zollern. "Perhaps the old man wasn't dead, after all."

But both Starr and Drummond Bell rejected this explanation. It was incredible that even a young, strong man, could survive the torture Abdulkhader had inflicted upon Hadj Abdi. And as Starr pointed out, Coventry Stewart would not have been so long delayed in his rendezvous by chancing upon the old man's body.

"No use sitting here," said Bell. "Let's go. Yusef's outside; we'll leave him here so that if Stewart shows up he can tell him where we've gone."

They set out together, but after riding a little way decided to separate, Starr and Drummond Bell to ride through one part of town and Fritz Zollern through the other. Somehow this division came about naturally; both the editor and the artist realized, as they rode away from Zollern, that they felt a restraint in his presence, some inexplicable repression. Bell voiced the feeling, after they had ridden a little way.

"Fritz," he observed, "has changed a lot in ten years."

"Yes," agreed Starr, and more outspoken, added, "He seems to be a little more Prussian than the Kaiser himself. I don't think much of foreign universities for Americans."

"I wonder," said Drummond Bell, "just how much of an American he is."

He would have had an answer to his question had he been able to observe certain proceedings which began just about that time.

Fritz Zollern, passing through a little square, or market-place, on one edge of which was set a little Spanish *cantina*, which catered, however, almost entirely to natives, as there were not half a dozen Spanish residents in El K'sar, when a voice halted him with a German greeting. Looking up he saw in the *cantina* a strainingly rotund figure in white pongee, which beckoned him. He returned the greeting and was about to pass on when it occurred to him that such an action would be thought discourteous in this inland town where so few foreigners came, wherefore he entered the *cantina* and grasped the fat, moist hand which was offered him, marveling not so much at the cordiality of the greeting, for the little round man was manifestly slightly under the influence of liquor, but at the fact that he was greeted by name.

He seated himself and, while his companion was attending to the matter of refreshment, studied the round head with close clipped yellow hair, the fat mustached face which seemed to be inflated from within, the protuberant gray eyes, which also seemed to indicate internal pressure. The inflated body in the white pongee and the seemingly swollen hands brought no recollection of this man's identity to Zollern. Wherefore after they clicked glasses he ventured a question.

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"Perhaps you knew me at Heidelberg?"

"No," replied his host, "that is not the case. We will speak English, because no one else here knows English. I did not ever know you before. You are surprized that I know your name, no? But there's a reason for that. I was informed in Tangier that you were coming and I saw you in Tangier—but I think you did not see me."

"You were informed of my coming!" exclaimed Zollern. "What do you mean? And—I should be wiser if I knew your name."

The fat man sipped his drink noisily, wiping his lips with the back of his hand, and smiled, making of his features the face of a gargoyle.

"Oh yes," he continued, "I was told you were coming, and I was told also that you have done good work in America."

Fritz Zollern with an effort controlled a start of surprize, and waited in silence. He was not unaware of the fact that not all Germans were good Germans, that there were Prussians in the secret service of France and England and other countries.

"Yes," repeated his companion, "you have done good work in America. It is so written in the records. And now that you are here you may do some good work here."

He looked slowly into Fritz Zollern's eyes, and then clapped his pudgy hands for further service from the *garçon*. Zollern reflected swiftly.

"I do not understand, I am afraid," he said at last. "It is true that I am the American correspondent for the *Volkszeitung* and other German papers—" he was interrupted by a cackle from his new acquaintance. The *garçon* set fresh drinks on the table and went back to his cave in the rear of the *cantina*.

"Oh yes," continued the fat man, "that is well known. I have read many of your articles—always I used to read them when I was in Berlin. Also your letters to the —— Import and Export Company, and it was I who for some time prepared the replies. Oh yes, yes," he broke off into another cackle. "You see, I know you not only as Fritz Zollern, but—as Number 273."

Zollern could no longer refuse to accept his cackling companion as a bona fide member of the German political intelligence service. The man's acquaintance with his own secret number was evidence not only that he was a member of the service, but that he was on the inside—the thousands of ordinary "correspondents" knew neither each other's names, unless by accident, nor their numbers.

BUT there was a certain test that he could make.

"In that case," he said, "you will no doubt be willing to tell me what code number you used on the drafts sent me through Security Trust last year."

"That number was 91," replied the other without hesitation. "The drafts were countersigned by Von Amsdorf and Wenn."

Zollern nodded. The man's answer had been perfectly correct.

"But I do not know your name," he said.

"My name does not matter," replied the fat one. "I am known here as Doktor Schloss. And I have here—" he reached into an inside pocket—"a letter which no doubt will interest you. You see, Mr. Zollern, I am your superior officer— Oh, very much your superior. If you will look at this letter—"

Fritz Zollern took the letter from the envelope, unfolded it and was startled at the signature scrawled at the bottom. It was a signature which he knew very well, the name of a very great personage. The letter itself was short and merely said that all persons to whom it was shown would consider it a command to obey the orders of Herr Doktor Gustav Schloss.

He handed the letter back with a stiff formality.

"But," he objected, "I shall be in Morocco but a short time. I am here with friends on a vacation, and—we do not plan to stay long."

"It is a strangely uncomfortable place to spend a vacation," answered Doktor Schloss, wiping the sweat off his bulging neck. "A most uncomfortable place. Besides, so many things can happen here." His attention seemed concentrated upon a fly which appeared determined to fall into his liquor and die happily, but the voice went on. "Most strange things happen here. For example, Mr. Zollern, only yesterday did the basha sew an old man up in raw hide and put him in the sun to die. This morning what was left of him was thrown outside the city wall. And also this morning—" the voice droned on now as though the speaker were under a duty merely to enunciate so many words— "this morning, also, there was

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considerable search made for that same body, but without results. Yes, it is a queer place to spend a vacation. I think we should have another drink." He clapped his hands again.

During this recital Zollern had tried to keep his grip upon himself, but he was gradually conscious of a menace hovering over him. How much did this man know in addition to what he had told? Why had he told it? Why had he shown him the letter? Was all this concerned with German political intrigue, or did it bear upon the question of what lay within the house of Bou Hamid? It was essential that he find out.

"It is as you say, a strange place—and strange things happen," he concurred, "nevertheless, it is a place that I am not entirely acquainted with, nor are my friends. And as we have all been here before, it does not seem strange that we should desire to return, for a few days."

"You were in very great haste to get here, I observed," said the Doktor, grinning. "Most extraordinary haste. And also—" his tone changed, became sharper—"and also you have much interest in the house of Bou Hamid."

Fritz Zollern stared at him now with lifted eyebrows and cold eyes.

"Bou Hamid was our friend," he said. "It seems my private affairs occupy much of your attention. May I ask why?"

"Oh, your private affairs do not interest me in the least," retorted Doktor Schloss, whose eyes resumed watching the antics of the now half-drunken fly. "Not in the least, except as they concern certain business which I have in hand and in which I demand your assistance. Business of a political nature."

"I do not recognize your authority," returned Zollern hotly. "My field is America, not Morocco. I am here privately, not as a member of the Service."

The bulgy man's attitude changed swiftly.

"You do not recognize my authority, eh? Do you desire then, that the American authorities be put in possession of data which we have concerning you?"

Fritz Zollern's face whitened. The threat was sufficient. It would all be very simple. Even the stupid American Federal Government could be set upon him by provable accusations which would emanate from nowhere at the bidding of the German Foreign Office. He would become an exile from the field of his endeavors, from his home, and would be hounded by the German Service, of which he had been a part. Swiftly he retracted.

"I did not mean," he stammered, "that I do not recognize your superior authority. I meant to say that I do not recognize your moral right to involve me in matters outside of my own territory."

Again the fat man cackled like a hen. He waved his pudgy hand as though dismissing the question.

"Oh, that is all right, then," he said. "We will not differ on the question of morality. We will grant what you say, so long as you grant the fact that I can command and you will obey. And—" he hesitated a space, gazing with bold, unwinking eyes at Zollern—"and I am glad to learn that you are here only on a visit—that you have no personal affairs here to demand your attention, as otherwise we might have some difficulties with—hm!—with a friend of ours."

"A friend?" questioned Zollern.

"I mean the basha, Sid Abdulkhader," answered the Doktor, gazing at the traffic passing the *cantina* door.

But before Zollern could formulate any comment, Doktor Schloss faced him again, bent forward over the table and with one pudgy hand emphasizing his words upon the wet, marble-topped table, he gave his subordinate comprehensive and specific orders. In Zollern's face sullen anger gradually gave way to interest, and interest to something else—something which narrowed his eyes and made them gleam. If Doktor Schloss noted, he did not comment. Only in conclusion, he said—

"It will be worth your while."

And Fritz Zollern nodded. He could see that.

VIII

IT WAS sunset when Starr and Bell returned to their headquarters after a fruitless endeavor to find trace of Coventry Stewart. From the beginning of their quest they had sensed its futility, unless their English friend had left the house of Abdulkhader, the basha, and had met with accident or delay in the public streets. If such a thing had happened, however, they realized that they would have a fair chance of learning of it,

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for foreigners are not numerous in El K'sar, the little incidents of life attract a great deal of attention and cause a great deal of comment, as is the case in all small communities the world over, and it naturally would be judged or known by the natives that the foreigners constituted one party, and that therefore all would be interested in whatever might happen to any individual of them. Once they had made circuit of that part of town they had elected to cover —including the larger market-place, which, of course, is the very center of all gossip, rumor and information—it became manifest that no accident had befallen the Englishman on the public streets. They were gazed at in mild curiosity, sometimes accompanied by an uncomplimentary remark, for the *Nasrini* is not looked upon with high favor in El K'sar, but no one approached them to tell them that this or that or the other thing had happened to their friend. Nor was there any discussion to be overheard involving mention of the foreigner, as there would have been if Coventry Stewart had figured in any local excuse for discussion.

Thus Starr and Bell were forced to the conclusion that their English friend had fallen victim to suspicion or knowledge of the basha, Abdulkhader. That any confirmation of this opinion could be gained seemed most highly improbable to them both. Nevertheless, they resolutely turned their horses towards the house which served as both dwelling and offices of his Excellency, Sid Abdulkhader. But when they reached it their disappointment was realized: the heavy, oaken, iron-studded gate was closed, and on either side of it squatted a black soldier wrapped in a blue *sulham*, rifle across his knees. They did not even rise at the approach of the Americans, as would have been courteous and customary, but merely shifted their rifle muzzles towards the visitors while one of them grunted an impolite demand to know why they approached the gate.

The Americans might as successfully have tried to gain information from a squatting brass Buddha as from them. Their inquiries concerning their friend were met with stupid stares and silence. The silver dollars which Starr, believing in the power of money to buy most things, ostensibly displayed, were observed with shrugs and silence. And even when Drummond Bell, irritated by their insolence, demanded audience with the basha, all he got was an angry stare and a sudden coarse command to go away. The uselessness of further effort along this particular line was apparent. They rode off to a little distance and then paused to turn and survey again the basha's house. But it was only a big white cube with a big oaken doorway guarded by the blacks. The doorway looked something like a mouth and a window on either side to represent eyes would have given the place a somewhat sinister facial aspect. But there were no windows.

"That," commented Drummond Bell, with a wave of his hand towards the so-called palace, "is where our friend is."

"I reckon you're right," agreed Starr. "What are we going to do about it? It looks like a hard nut to crack."

They discussed this matter on their homeward journey, riding their horses side by side, but upon arrival at their quarters they had reached no satisfactory conclusion. It would have been as easy to evolve a plan for carrying off the governor of the Bank of England from his private office as to penetrate this armed stronghold of Abdulkhader. But despite the hopelessness of the situation, both were resolved that steps must be taken, and at once, for the rescue of their friend.

They found Fritz Zollern waiting for them—a restless Zollern, judging from the manner in which he was pacing the big living room; a slightly intoxicated Zollern, judging from his flushed face and a half emptied bottle of whisky on the table; an impatient Zollern, judging from his opening remark that he had been waiting hours for them.

"Any news of Stewart?" he asked. And quickly—"I see by your faces there isn't."

Starr mixed himself a drink and stood sipping it. Drummond Bell threw himself into a big chair, lighted a cigaret and watched Zollern from beneath dropped eyelids. That the man was laboring under stress of some sort was rather apparent, and Drummond Bell suspected that the whisky he had consumed was an antidote rather than a cause.

"No," answered Starr, "no trace of him. If he had had an accident on the streets we would have known it; but there's not a word concerning him in circulation. I agree with Bell that the basha is holding him—

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and that puts a —— of a job up to us."

"I don't," objected Zollern, stopping in his stride. To Drummond Bell it seemed that Zollern's voice was unduly explosive.

"Why—have you any information?" demanded Starr. "For heaven's sake, man, sit down, and take it easy. What's up?"

Fritz Zollern filled another glass and swallowed it, but he did not follow Starr's advice. Instead he continued his swift pacing, setting time to his words.

"Yes," he said. "I've got news of Stewart. And I—I don't know whether to believe it or not. I didn't think he would try to double-cross us. But—but it looks as though he had."

"What do you mean?" demanded Drummond Bell sharply. "What do you mean by 'double-cross us'?"

"I mean this." Zollern whirled upon him, his face flushed, his eyes glaring. "I mean that Stewart has made a deal with the basha concerning the loot—the treasure. He went to the basha's house this morning all right—but he never left it. He decided to sell us out instead."

"Well, I'll be ——!" ejaculated Starr, rising. "You don't— Are you serious? Or—" He paused and looked significantly at the bottle on the table.

"Am I serious? Am I serious?" Zollern's voice was hoarse. "Yes, I am serious—and I am not drunk. He has sold us out, the swine. And tonight he is going to take the basha to Bou Hamid's house and show him the loot. ——!"

He slammed his glass down upon the table, shattering it, seized another, half filled it and tossed it off neatly.

Drummond Bell's voice broke the silence gently.

"I don't believe it," he said.

Zollern whirled upon him.

"You think that I am—that I am lying?" he demanded.

Drummond Bell's laughter was forced as he answered.

"Oh no, old man, not at all. I think—that is, maybe somebody has been stringing you. Where did you get your information, if I may ask?"

"Stringing, ——!" cried Zollern. "My information is straight. I—I ran across a fellow here, a German, that I used to know in college—in Heidelberg. He is a—a sort of employee of the German legation in Tangier and it's—it's his business to know things. Abdulkhader, the basha, is against the French in Morocco, and for the Germans. Consequently my friend from the German Legation is on good terms with Abdulkhader. Also he has—well, he has sources of information in Abdulkhader's house."

"Spies, you mean?" the inquiry came softly from Drummond Bell.

Zollern faced him at the word.

"Call them that if you want to," he said. "Anyhow, from them he learned that Stewart and the basha are on most friendly terms with an understanding between them. That this understanding concerns the house of Bou Hamid—and that tonight they are going to that house. Any fool would know what that means."

"Did your—er—hm!—your friend, the German, know why they should be interested in the house of Bou Hamid?" Drummond Bell wanted to know.

"Not so far as I could find out," answered Zollern. "But—who knows? Maybe he did, but would he tell me?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," Bell took it upon himself to answer." "I thought maybe he might."

Zollern looked at him angrily, manifestly not knowing how to take the thrust—if it was a thrust.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

But abruptly the attitude of the little artist changed from light mockery to seriousness. Another question had been upon the tip of his tongue, but he had swallowed it. The matter was serious, as obviously was Fritz Zollern, although Drummond Bell could not for a moment consider the possibility of Coventry Stewart being guilty of such an act as had been ascribed to him. However, he and Starr knew nothing—had had no more than a suspicion that the Englishman was the basha's prisoner, while Zollern, on the contrary, had a very definite story, and one which might well cause him to become over excited.

"This looks bad," said the artist. "What do you think of it, Starr?"

"—— if I know," replied Starr. "I can't believe it of Stewart. And yet—" The look he turned upon Zollern completed the sentence.

"You don't believe that I'm lying?" growled Zollern.

"No, no, of course not," denied Starr instantly. "It isn't that, old man, it's just

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that I can't conceive of Stewart doing a thing like that."

Zollern shrugged his shoulders; his voice was now thick from liquor.

"Big prize at stake," he said. "Big prize. Better man than Stewart might sell out for it. Split it two ways instead of four —or five, if Lane shows up."

"Well," demanded Bell, "what are we going to do about it? We can't let them get away with it. What do you say, Starr?"

"You're right," replied Starr. "But just what to do—" he paused in thought.

"What to do? What to do?" the rasping voice of Zollern broke in. "I'll tell you what to do. If they're going to the house of Bou Hamid tonight, *we'll* go to the house of Bou Hamid tonight too. What say? We'll be there too, eh? We'll fix the basha and Stewart right. What say?"

He picked up a glass and reached for the bottle, but he stopped and shook his head:

"No, no, Fritzie, old boy, you've had enough. Got business ahead. Mustn't get pickled."

He crossed the room and threw himself upon a couch.

"Wake me up when you get ready to go," he said, and a moment later he was snoring.

It was growing dark. Starr lighted the big candles that served them for illumination, and they opened some canned meats which, with a supply of native bread, gave them a supper. There was little discussion of what lay ahead of them. Starr made several efforts to talk of the matter, but each time Drummond Bell turned the talk into a different channel. After all, they could not make much of a plan. They could go to the house of Bou Hamid, but what would develop after that lay in the hands of fate.

An hour later they awakened their companion, who declined food, but who fortified himself again from the bottle, and they set out through the narrow black streets for the house of Bou Hamid.

IX

THE house of Bou Hamid squatted like a square of white sugar in its garden, now faintly illumined by the brilliant stars. Behind it was a black mass of palm trees, which whispered together in the night wind. The three Americans advanced along the street which ended in a gateway in the wall surrounding the gardens, and when near enough to observe the gate, halted for a consultation. Their first question had been whether the gate was guarded on the outside. Closed and locked it would undoubtedly be, and no doubt there would be guards inside the walls. They failed, however, to observe any motion, or even any black shadows against the white wall which would indicate the presence of guards outside the gate.

"In my opinion," Fritz Zollern made the suggestion, "we should go around the wall away from the gate in order to affect our entrance to the garden. There are sure to be guards near the gate on the inside, but it is scarcely probable that the entire wall will be watched. Once inside we can reconnoiter and wait for the arrival of the basha and Stewart."

"And what after that?" asked Starr.

"That, I should say," responded Zollern, "would depend upon how many visitors come. If the basha has a guard with him, what chance will we have to do anything? If there is only he and Stewart—well, that will be different."

To both Starr and Bell this seemed to be the only program open to themselves. After the basha came, guards would no doubt be stationed outside the gate, wherefore it would be best for them to get inside the walls at once if they could. What would happen after that would have to depend, as Zollern had said, upon circumstances. Swiftly they made their way past the gate in the southern wall, keeping as much in the shadows of the aloe and cactus as was possible, passed along the somewhat shadowed western side and, without calling forth any demand from watchful guards, reached the shadows of the palm trees outside the northern wall. Here they stopped, and Zollern, standing in Starr's clasped hands, got his elbows over the wall and drew himself up to reconnoiter. Very shortly he whispered "All right," drew himself up and reached down for Starr's hand to aid him up the eight-foot barrier. Then they reached down together and easily lifted little Drummond Bell up beside them. At once Zollern lowered himself into the garden, and Starr followed suit, noting as he did so that they descended into what was apparently a little court or walled flower garden, which was surrounded by palms and

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a high hedge. Zollern grasped him by the arm and drew him towards the shadows, meanwhile motioning to the artist to hasten.

But Drummond Bell was paying no attention. He was hunched forward, gazing down the other side of the wall where from the shadows his name had just been called. As he stared a shadow came into the view and rushed up to the wall, reached up and seized his feet as if to drag him off. Drummond Bell recognized in the shadow the boy Yusef, son of Hadj Abdi.

"No! No!" cried the boy in Spanish. "Come away! Come away! There is danger there. Where are the others? Come away!" An imploring tug at Bell's feet and chattering in Spanish. The artist was able to understand enough of his words to become thoroughly alarmed, to realize that a great danger menaced them. A sudden conviction that they had been betrayed by Fritz Zollern came to him.

"Starr!" he called. "Starr! Come out of it! This is a trap!"

Even as he cried out there came sounds of voices crashing about among the bushes, a struggling dark mass emerged into the open space of the court and, just as the artist perceived that Starr and Zollern were both in the grasp of half a dozen men, two figures darted across the court towards the point in the wall where he sat. Quickly he slid to the ground, and, at Yusef's urgent "Come! This way!" ran at the heels of the Moorish boy through the palm grove.

Looking back he saw a black figure standing upon the wall reaching downward, and knew that the pursuit was on. But almost at once Yusef turned at right angles to their former course, and very shortly they came to a mass of houses. Yusef turned into a black area-way, led the way across several little courts and finally threw open the door of a little room in a brick-walled hut where a spluttering candle gave faint illumination, and an old black man lay upon a pile of straw in a corner. He closed the door behind him and barred it with a massive oaken stave.

"It is but a poor place," said the boy, "but they will not find us here, I think."

Drummond Bell caught his meaning and smiled his thanks. Then he lighted a cigaret from the drunken candle, squatted upon the floor and considered the matter, the boy squatting near him. This was bad business, and he thanked his lucky stars that he had not precipitately followed Zollern and Starr over the wall; that some premonition or unformulated suspicion had held him upon the top of the barrier those half dozen seconds which had given the boy Yusef time to reach him. Starr and Zollern had been seized before they could make resistance, before they could draw their pistols, and the number of their captors made it quite manifest that had he, Drummond Bell, been in the garden instead of on top of the wall, he would have had no more chance than they. This realization swept away the thought that had bothered him on his flight—that he had perhaps deserted his friends in time of trouble. But he could not have aided them, and assuredly it were better for one of them to be at liberty than for all of them to be prisoners. Starr, Zollern, Coventry Stewart—no, Coventry Stewart was not a prisoner, he suddenly remembered—or that was what Zollern had claimed. But this last development put a different aspect upon the situation. And now his suspicions of Zollern crystallized, were formulated in words.

"Why, ——!" he exclaimed, "this couldn't just have *happened*. They were waiting for us in that garden—and Zollern led us there. And that being true, no doubt he lied about Stewart."

The boy Yusef started as Bell uttered the name of the Englishman. Swiftly he pulled up the skirt of his brown *djellaba* and reached into a little leather *shakarah* slung beneath his shoulder. When his hand came forth it held a cigaret which he offered to Bell. The artist looked from it to the boy's face in puzzlement, and the boy explained, three times, in three languages, from which Bell was able to get his meaning.

"You say this is from Mr. Stewart?" he asked, looking at the little white roll.

"*Si, si*, Mr. Stewart." And he chattered in Spanish.

Drummond Bell drew the candle nearer and by its light examined the cigaret carefully. The boy had told him, unless he was mistaken, that in his endeavor to find his father's remains, he had even managed to penetrate into the basha's house, and that there either Coventry Stewart, or some one acting for him, had given him this cigaret to take to Stewart's friends. Drummond Bell saw that it bore a tiny monogram, C. S.—a little affectation of Coventry Stewart's concerning which they had often joked with

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him. Then he took out his pen knife and carefully slit the cigaret lengthwise. Inside was what he had expected to find—a little quill of paper, apparently the wrapper of another cigaret, upon which was penciled in exceedingly fine script a message which ran:

The basha is wise to something and I am his unwilling guest. Do not endanger yourselves on my account, as I shall no doubt be able to manage things shortly. I have found a friend or two here. But be most careful yourselves. Do not trust too much in—

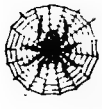
A word had been written here but was blacked out and the word "anyone" substituted.

A German Doktor is intimate with the basha and I think our affairs interest him. Ta-ta.

Drummond Bell whistled in astonishment, and a dozen thoughts tumbled head over heels through his mind. Zollern *had* lied about Stewart. Or had he been lied to? Only one who knew of Bou Hamid's treasure could have made up the story. And a German was intimate with the basha. Zollern had met a German friend who had spies in the basha's palace. Had Zollern sold them out to the basha? Or to this German Doktor who was the basha's friend? He must have made up the story concerning Stewart—probably to entice them to Bou Hamid's house so that they could be captured. By whom? By the basha? Or by this German friend of Zollern? Zollern himself had been taken prisoner, that is true—but of course that would be for the sake of appearances. And now Stewart was in the hands of the basha, Starr in the hands of persons unknown, Zollern apparently a prisoner, but at any rate lined up against them, and he, Drummond Bell, alone was left at liberty.

The situation staggered him for a time. What did the captors do with his friend? How long would he himself be able to preserve his liberty? What could he do towards the rescue of Starr and Stewart? What could he do towards preventing the discovery of the treasure in Bou Hamid's house? Of course neither Zollern nor Starr knew exactly where or how the treasure was hidden, and hence neither voluntarily nor involuntarily could either of them surrender the secret. Drummond Bell's thoughts suddenly produced the name of Lane. If Lane were only here. Then the situation would not be quite so unequal. He, Drummond Bell, wasn't a fire-eater like Lane. Tex would solve some of the problems, probably by turning loose with a couple of guns—but there was a big difference between the prowess of Drummond Bell, artist, five feet two, and a hundred and ten pounds, and 'Tex' Lane, ex-cowboy, six feet in his socks, and a hundred and ninety pounds above them. Drummond Bell smiled wryly as the two comparative figures stalked before his mental eye. But the good Lord knew where Lane was, while he with his hundred and ten pounds was very distinctly in the middle of a very serious storm.

X



TO STARR the sudden and unexpected attack in the garden of Bou Hamid's house came like a stroke of paralysis, numbing for a moment both mind and muscles. One moment he had stood in absolute quiet and tranquillity, looking back towards Drummond Bell sitting upon the wall, wondering a little why he did not immediately follow; the next moment the bushes about him seemed to take human forms, to throw themselves upon him and force him to earth by their weight. After one breath of stunned surprize and dismay he had fought madly, putting into his efforts all the strength within him. But he had been half-smothered by his attackers whom he knew to be natives by the pungent odor of their coarse woollen *djellabas*, and his blows fell with apparent harmlessness upon well protected bodies, or were rendered futile by things which broke their force; and he could secure no grip upon any one of his antagonists.

Nor could he reach the automatic pistol beneath his left arm. Once he had nearly succeeded in grasping its butt when a great weight fell upon his right elbow, and for a moment he thought his arm had been broken. His finger tips could feel the reassuring checked wooden butt of the pistol, but they could not move to close upon it. Then one of the smelly, rough woollen *djellabas* was wrapped around his head and he was jerked to his feet. His arms were held, and the assailant who had wrapped the *djellaba* about his head now twisted the garment viciously, constricting his throat until he could scarcely breathe and could

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not swallow. During this time he was dimly conscious that another struggle had been going on near by.

"Fritz," he called, his voice croaking. "Are you there, Fritz?"

Zollern's voice returned answer.

"I'm here," it said. "They got me, too."

"Did they get Bell?" Starr shouted.

There was no immediate reply and Starr repeated the question. Then Zollern answered.

"Yes," he said, "they got Bell, too."

Whereupon Starr raised his voice and cried words to Drummond Bell. There was no reply save from Zollern.

"He can't hear you," he said. "He's too far off."

Paying no attention to the voices of their captives, the natives had been talking among themselves in their guttural Arabic as though discussing some point or other. Now, with a rough "*Ajhi*—Come—" the man who held the twisted *djellaba* around Starr's head gave a jerk which caused the American to see pinwheels in the dark.

"*Ajhi*" repeated the native with another jerk, and Starr, not wishing to walk backward, twisted around so that he could follow the direction of pull from his captor. Behind him as he went he heard the voice of Zollern raised in occasional objection.

After perhaps a hundred paces his captors stopped. He heard the slide of an iron bolt and the creak of unoiled hinges. Then the *djellaba* was jerked from his head and he was pushed head first into the blackness beyond a door sill. He fell sprawling, and heard the crash of the door as it was closed, the scrape of the bolt as it was shot home. Ruefully he sat up, his eyes useless in the impenetrable darkness, and rubbed his throat where the stifling *djellaba* had been twisted. Then he massaged his ribs which felt as though they had been kicked, not by naked feet, but by feet encased in heavy shoes. In the latter process he made the discovery that his automatic pistol was still beneath his arm, and he gave thanks for the native ignorance of the shoulder holster. It was then that Morton Starr forgot entirely that he was a product of the highest branch of business civilization. He drew the pistol and cocked it, tucked his feet under him and sat there in the darkness like a plaster Buddha. But the teachings of Guatama did not occupy his thoughts: rather, decidedly modified, with due regard for the exigencies of publication, what Morton Starr was thinking was—

"I'll be —— if I don't shoot —— out of any —— —— who opens that door."

But anger can no longer last long in civilized man, especially in one who has a sense of humor. For perhaps half an hour Starr squatted there glowering into the darkness, the gun leveled on his knee, his finger on the trigger; but little by little the anger had drained away and suddenly he chuckled.

"——!" he muttered. "I don't even know if I'm pointing this gun at the door or not, and this position is getting tiresome."

Whereupon he unfolded his legs and crawled across the floor until he found a wall, which he followed to its conjunction with another. There, propping himself comfortably in the corner, he searched his pockets for cigarets and matches and chuckled again at finding them. He lighted a smoke, and in the illumination afforded by that match and another, was enabled to observe the small chamber in which he was confined—solid stone walls without windows, and with a single door, that through which he had been thrust and which he knew was now bolted on the outside. The match burned out, and with the friendly glow of his cigaret for companionship, the American proceeded to consider the situation from its lately acquired angle.

It did not seem to offer much source of pleasant reflection. It appeared to be, he reflected, what even the most optimistic of adventurers might truthfully call a "jam." He summed it up: He and Drummond Bell and Zollern were captives of a person unknown; Coventry Stewart had disappeared and, according to Zollern, had sold out to the basha, Abdulkhader. That was that; that accounted for all of their party. Except Lane, of course—but Lane was probably still in peaceful Southern California. Hadj Abdi, who knew the secret of the treasure, was dead—and if the basha, through Coventry Stewart, had learned the secret of their mission, Messrs. Starr, Bell and Zollern would be fortunate if they escaped with their lives, whereas the treasure was undoubtedly lost to them. There was little question that their captors were the basha's men, although of course it was possible for ruffians to be hired for such a job by any one. However, there was no

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one else, Starr reflected, who could know about the treasure. Coventry Stewart knew of it; he had gone to see the basha; he had never returned. Zollern's German friend had learned of the existence of the treasure and of Coventry Stewart's treason to his friends though spies in the basha's palace; hence it seemed absolutely logical to suppose that their captors were the basha's men, and that the purpose in making them prisoners was to get them out of the way at least until the treasure could be recovered. And perhaps forever, for that matter.

And yet logical though his reasoning was, Starr was not satisfied with it. He smoked cigaret after cigaret and went over his reasoning time after time. There was no flaw in it that he could detect; step by step known facts indicated the obvious conclusion to be drawn. But suddenly the American realized that the source of his dissatisfaction with his own reasoning was not a question of logic, but a question of emotion: supposed fact, and reasoning therefrom, had told him that Coventry Stewart had sold out to the basha—but he realized that his subconscious mind had all along been opposing, on this point, his conscious mind. He could not really believe that Coventry Stewart had been traitorous to his friends. It was unbelievable. Yet what other explanation of the situation could be found? Another period of reflection failed to enlighten him. It did, however, strengthen his belief in Coventry Stewart, although that strengthened belief left him utterly at sea as to the causes of his present predicament.

BUT if Starr vainly studied the puzzle in the darkness of his prison, if Drummond Bell studied it with equally rueful intensity in the rude hut to which Yusef had led him, they were not alone in their mental exasperation and bewilderment. If the thick stone wall against which Starr's left shoulder was propped had been magically rendered transparent, and the adjoining room illuminated by the torches of invisible *djinnoon*, he would have seen a man angrily pacing the floor of another small chamber, equally stone-walled and windowless, with a single door—a room twin to that which he himself occupied—growling a mixture of comments and curses in four languages. He would also have recognized the man as Fritz Zollern. And had he listened to the angry words of the man he would no doubt have experienced much surprize.

For although Starr himself had not anticipated capture and imprisonment, he accepted it as the outcome of an unsuccessful effort. Specifically he had not expected freedom if he should be caught, wherefore he suffered no disappointment and disillusionment on this score, as did Fritz Zollern. Also, the sources of their individual surprizes were different. Starr was surprized at the swiftness of and apparent preparedness for their capture—which had not surprized Fritz Zollern in the least. Zollern's surprize had come when, Starr, having been shot head-first into the darkness of an impregnable small room in Bou Hamid's house and the door bolted upon him, he, Fritz Zollern, had not then felt the hands of his captor taken from him, had not been greeted as a friend instead of an enemy; had, in fact, been accorded exactly the same treatment which he had witnessed being imposed upon his fellow American. In short, while he had expected the pretense to end when Starr was safe behind a bolted door, he had been rendered speechless with amazement when rough hands had propelled him swiftly through another door and bolted it behind him. This was not at all according to Hoyle.

But if Starr was in the dark both physically and mentally, there was at least a gleam of light in the thoughts of Zollern. Suspicious by nature, and rendered deeply so by his work for the Fatherland, he had scarcely struck his prison floor before he had realized one gleaming fact: Doktor Schloss had used him to get Starr and Bell out of the way—and then had double-crossed him. He himself was now as impotent as he had rendered Starr. And Doktor Schloss and the basha would have things their own way.

Around this pivotal fact revolved Fritz Zollern's thoughts, and they were not pleasant. Under the pressure brought to bear upon him by the Doktor as his superior in the German Secret Service, Zollern had agreed to betray his friends. But this was not all. In his talk with Doktor Schloss he had satisfied himself of a thing that he was not so sure of now—that the Doktor did not suspect the existence of a great treasure in the house of Bou Hamid. What the Doktor had told him, and what he had believed, was that the basha desired the Americans

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out of the way because he believed them to be in search of the source of Bou Hamid's gold—not because he believed that there existed this treasure in the house itself—and that for political purposes, best known to himself, Doktor Schloss desired to oblige the basha in this matter. But now Zollern realized quite clearly that the rotund Doktor was not only his superior officially, but his superior mentally: it was clear that the Doktor did suspect the existence of the treasure, clear that he had joined hands with the basha in the effort to recover it, clear that he had used him, Zollern, in order to betray the Americans into his own hands —and clear that he had no intention of accepting Fritz Zollern as a partner in his affairs. And thus when Starr squatted upon the floor not a dozen feet away, gun in hand, fiercely resolved to shoot any one who opened the door, Fritz Zollern paced his chamber resolved with equal earnestness to shoot the heart out of Doktor Schloss at the first opportunity.

XI

THAT night and on the following day Drummond Bell lay in hiding in the miserable hut of Yusef's ancient and half-paralyzed kinsman. He was far from being a coward, yet he realized that it would be the height of folly to show himself on the streets of El K'sar. No doubt the basha had made it uncomfortable for those who had let him slip through their fingers, and no doubt he had promised to make it still more uncomfortable for certain people if the third American was not run to earth. Furthermore, he knew quite well that the basha, having failed to accomplish what he desired by stealth, was in a perfectly good position to issue public orders for his, Bell's, arrest on any trumped-up charge which occurred to him—or on none at all, for that matter—and that he would be aided in every way by the populace of the town of El K'sar, who heartily disliked foreigners. If the basha had done this, Drummond Bell knew that he would probably take less than a hundred steps from his hiding place before some citizen of the town would seize him. And even if the basha had not done this, Bell was satisfied that he would not get very far before the news of his presence would reach the ears of those who were in search of him, for news flies as fast by word of mouth in Morocco as by telephone elsewhere.

Consequently common sense forced him to a day of inactivity, except that he sent the boy Yusef to the quarters they had occupied, to observe what might be observed. He had hesitated before doing this, but realized that one hooded Moorish boy looked very like any other, and that Yusef could easily escape detection where he himself could not. The boy had returned quickly with the news that men were watching the place from concealed vantage points. Thus proving to Drummond Bell the wisdom of his decision to remain in hiding.

Nor could he evolve any course of procedure for the coming night that which offered hope of accomplishing much. The fact that he alone was free to act did not seem to him to be much of a handicap; he failed to perceive what three or four or even a half dozen men could do in the circumstances. There could be no attempt to release, by force, either Coventry Stewart from the basha's palace, or Starr from the house of Bou Hamid, that would not be disastrously futile. He alone had as much chance as would half a dozen men—which was none whatever. Force was out of the question, and to the artist it seemed diplomacy was also out of the question. Assuredly he had no chance of rescuing either of his friends without gaining access to the places of their captivity, and entrance into these places, ungainable by force, appeared equally unobtainable, so far as he was concerned, by any plan which he could conceive—especially so in view of the fact that his mere appearance would be the signal for his own seizure.

Between these thoughts and the bitter condemnation of Fritz Zollern, he spent the morning. Then, after Yusef had returned from his mission, he forced his mind into other channels and spent the afternoon learning Arabic from the youth—not with the idea that it would do him any especial good, but because it served to keep his thoughts for a time away from the situation which confronted him and his friends. His frequent ludicrous mistakes made both himself and the boy laugh heartily, and when evening fell and the lesson was concluded he was in a much better and more optimistic frame of mind.

He dined on a bowl of *kesk'soo* and a

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baked chicken, with a bottle of wine which Yusef had bought for him, and thus fortified, he prepared to go forth with Yusef. He donned a coarse brown *djellaba* which the boy had procured for him, the hood of which well covered his face, and made sure his automatic pistol was properly set. As he examined the gun Yusef, who to Bell's surprize had never during the day mentioned Hadj Abdi, his father, and whose reticence on this point the artist had respected, reached beneath his own *djellaba* and produced a revolver which he held out to Drummond Bell.

"Is good?" he asked in newly-learned English.

The artist took the revolver to examine it. He found it to be a .38, somewhat ancient, but apparently in fair condition. Carrying it to the candle light he examined the contact of hammer point with cartridge cap, knowing that the usual trouble with old guns was that they missed fire because the hammer point had been worn down, or the cylinder had loosened. As he did this he was wondering what the boy had in mind. Returning the gun to him he said:

"It is a good gun. Whom do you want to kill?" he asked and smiled a little, not so much at the question, as at the fact that his lesson in Arabic had chanced to give him the necessary words.

There was no reflection of his smile upon the face of Yusef, however; and it was no longer the face of a boy. Its lines were hard and its eyes were stern.

"The basha, Abdulkhader," he answered.

Drummond Bell found in his own heart no objection to the boy's desire. The features of old Hadj Abdi lying in the blazing sun of the court yard in the shrinking cowhide appeared before him, and to his surprize the face of Hadj Abdi changed to that of his own father. He shuddered.

"Take your time and shoot straight," he said, and although the Arabic was faulty, Yusef seemed to understand.

Together they went cautiously into the darkness.

By a dark and devious route, avoiding all lights and secreting themselves now and then as people passed, they made their way to the palm trees behind the house of Bou Hamid, and there the American concealed himself while the boy reconnoitered along the wall. He had objected to this procedure, at first, but the boy had pointed out that there was little danger, that being only a boy, he would be pursued, even if he were observed, and so Drummond Bell had let him go. There was no moon, but the stars gave a faint illumination, touching the white wall and house with phosphorous.

Soon the boy returned with the information that he had heard and seen no one, even though he had climbed a palm tree and had thus been able to look over the wall into the garden. But the artist was not satisfied with this, at least to the extent of venturing upon the wall in this particular place. Instead he determined to get a view of the entrance gateway, to observe for awhile what might there occur.

He had noticed that in entering the palm grove they had crossed a little gully, some six feet wide and a couple of feet deep, and it occurred to him now that shallow as it was, it might afford concealment to them in case it extended past the gate. He found it impossible to explain his idea to the boy, but Yusef followed him. Finding the gully, Drummond Bell threw himself flatwise in it and proceeded to inch along towards the gate, which he could see at a distance of something like a hundred yards. Because of the darkness he could not tell whether guards waited there or not, but his ears could detect no sound nor his eyes any motion in the shadows. Proceeding cautiously, he was pleased to find that the gully deepened slightly as it approached the gate, and that it swerved away from it a little. Apparently a road had formerly run along the wall, and the gully bordered this road. In perhaps a quarter of an hour he found himself within fifty feet of the gate, and here his progress was stopped by a culvert. It seemed a good point of observation, and Drummond Bell settled himself for a period of waiting.

THE minutes passed eventlessly. He was sure now that there were no guards on duty outside the gate, although this fact did not detract substantially from the difficulty of the situation. For the gates were closed and no doubt they were guarded on the inside. It seemed folly for him even to hope that opportunity might knock for him upon these gates and open them to him. Or for that matter, that any other combination of circumstances would make it possible for

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him to gain unobserved access to Bou Hamid's garden.

Before long, however, he was startled by the sound of horse's hoofs, and at the same moment Yusef seized his arm and pulled him down close to the ground beside the culvert. The sound grew nearer, and suddenly Drummond Bell realized with dismay that there were two roads to the gate of Bou Hamid's house, and that one of them led across the culvert by which he knelt; also, that the horseman, whose figure was now dimly visible, was approaching the culvert. Regretting that the culvert was sided up so that he could not get beneath it, he settled himself lower and held his breath. The horse's feet drummed upon the planks and then stopped.

Drummond Bell saw that the horseman, a big man in a dark *sulham*, and riding a black horse, had reined his mount to a standstill and now seemed to be studying the gateway of the house. He felt a little motion beside him and heard a sound as of breath inhaled sharply. Then, so swiftly that he had time neither to think nor to move, the boy Yusef made a quick motion, his revolver flashed in the starlight, yellow flame streaked towards the horseman and the night's tranquillity was shattered by a crash. The black horse reared and whirled about. The gun crashed again, and Drummond Bell heard Yusef's voice snarling:

"The basha! Abdulkhader! That dog of dogs!"

Standing now, Yusef pulled the trigger of his revolver for a third time and a third time the yellow finger pointed towards the horseman, whose horse now by great leaps was carrying him away. Followed a shout from inside the walls, and a shouted answer.

"*Ajhi! Ajhi!*" cried Yusef, with urging hand upon Drummond Bell's arm.

Stooping as low as possible, he followed the boy swiftly up the gully, but his ears, listening for the crash of gates thrown hurriedly open, did not hear that sound, although the shouting in the garden continued. They reached the corner of the garden and plunged into the darkness of the palm grove. There they paused a moment to listen, but strangely enough it seemed that those within the walls were about to make no investigation concerning the shooting. They heard more shouts and the voices of men discussing the shots, but there was no noise of opening gates, no sound of footsteps outside the walls.

Now Drummond Bell knew that his faint hopes were at an end, his small plan shattered by three bullets from the boy's revolver. Those inside the walls of Bou Hamid's house, had they not been on guard before, surely would now be truly vigilant, and probably they would all of them stay up the rest of the night discussing the meaning of the shots they had heard. And besides this, the boy's shots manifestly had not killed the basha, which meant that within a short time the town would be in an uproar, and the basha's guards, as well as the local garrison, would be in action. Drummond Bell believed that he himself would be the chief person sought by the basha's men. And thus, without further hope of action at the house of Bou Hamid, and faced by the certainty that a little while would see the search for himself on in earnest—with sudden and violent death his portion in case of capture—Drummond Bell asked Yusef to lead the way back to their hiding place as swiftly as possible—or to a better one if he knew it.

The boy started off swiftly, but had taken scarcely a dozen steps when he stopped abruptly, and held out a detaining hand towards the American. After a moment's pause he nodded his head as though convinced of something.

"Come," he said, then, and set off at right angles to his previous course. Drummond Bell followed. In ten or perhaps fifteen minutes they emerged from an olive grove, and the American found that they were within a stone's throw of a ruined portion of the old city wall. The boy drew him across a tangle of weeds until they came to the wall. Over several piles of débris they clambered, and at last to a little hole in the wall which had run transversely to the main barrier.

"Make light," requested the boy.

Drummond Bell took from his pocket a small electric torch and switched it on. Its light showed that beyond the tiny opening was a room. He flashed the light about the little room and found that it was perhaps ten feet square, dry, and very apparently unused.

"You here," whispered Yusef. "I bring to eat." Yusef also had learned words that afternoon. "And I look."

Drummond Bell shut off his flashlight,

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and began a low-voiced remonstrance with Yusef for wishing to undertake this dangerous mission. At that moment a big black figure leaped at them. The American heard a crunching blow and saw Yusef crumple where he stood. Before he himself could turn, before his hand had more than started for his pistol, another blow fell and he, too, dropped into bottomless darkness.

XII

DRUMMOND BELL regained consciousness to face a startling scene.

He found himself leaning against a wall in a room which he knew to be one of those in the house of Bou Hamid—a room lighted by two huge candles in tall brass candle-sticks standing on the floor. By chance his eyes found first the figure of his friend Starr, leaning against an opposite wall, bound hand and foot. Beside Starr was a motionless huddle which he recognized as Yusef—dead or alive, he could not tell. The boy's eyes were closed and he made no motion.

The artist turned his head to see who else was present, and started with astonishment: beyond question the old man with the dark face and gray hair and beard who, also shackled, leaned in one corner, was Hadj Abdi—the same Hadj Abdi whom the basha had sewed in raw cowhide and had forced to die under a cruel sun. No ghost, but Hadj Abdi himself.

The fourth person in the little room was a stranger to Drummond Bell, a red-faced man of straining rotundity, with pig-like eyes set in a round, red face, upon whose head short flaxen hair bristled upright. He bore the Prussian hall-mark so plainly that the agile mind of the artist, hampered although it was by a terrific headache, jumped at once to the conclusion that this was the German Doktor to whom Coventry Stewart had referred in his cigaret message as a friend of the basha, and of whom Fritz Zollern had spoken as being a friend of his college days, and who had given him the alleged information concerning the treason of Coventry Stewart.

But what was the explanation for this little gathering, he wondered. The presence of Hadj Abdi, who by all rights should have been very dead, needed explanation; in fact it intimated a very unexpected explanation, for assuredly the basha himself had intended, and taken for granted, the death of the old man. Where did this German enter the problem? Or rather—because he had entered it apparently through some as yet unexplained connection with Fritz Zollern—what were his intentions? That they concerned the treasure of Bou Hamid was an unavoidable conclusion. The presence of Hadj Abdi and of Starr and of himself pointed clearly to this. Then where did the basha come in? For assuredly the basha was not the type of man to keep a finger out of any worth-while pudding.

A number of his questions were to be answered promptly. The rotund German, an evil smile of gloating upon his face, cleared his throat and spoke, in much the same manner that he might have called together a meeting of a small club of which he was the presiding officer. He looked at none of his forced guests, but staring in front of him, spoke heavily in English.

"There are four parts of human thought," he announced ponderously. "The first of them is knowledge, which is made up of facts; the second is intelligence, which is made up of beliefs; the third is imagination, which is made up of possibilities; and the fourth is hope, which is constituted of dreams—desires—. For practical purposes, as in the present business, we may dismiss the fourth classification, hope. The third, imagination, will not be needed, The second, belief, will adjust itself properly in accordance with the first division, knowledge, or fact."

Drummond Bell looked at Starr with raised eyebrows, and a shrug of Starr's shoulders was his answer. A lecture on pyschology at the present moment presented an atmosphere of unreality. The voice of the German droned on.

"When we deal with hope, imagination, or even with belief, we are dealing with unsure matters. We are apt to be deceived; but when we are dealing with knowledge, with fact, we may be certain of our ground. Therefore, I shall deal with facts and facts only."

"Too bad," interrupted Drummond Bell, at this point, "that your friend Zollern can't hear you. I am sure he would approve."

"Your friend Zollern made the error," retorted the German, "of mistaking belief

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and imagination and hope for knowledge. Facts are not as he thought."

His eyes faced front again.

"I continue," he announced. "We deal with facts and facts only. It is a fact that somewhere about this house of Bou Hamid is hidden a very substantial treasure. It is a fact that Bou Hamid desired that treasure, upon his death, to fall into the hands of four Americans and one Englishman. It is a fact that three of those Americans came to Morocco, that two of them are now present in this room, while the third is—hm!—unavoidably detained elsewhere, and that the Englishman is a guest in the palace of the basha, Abdulkhader. It is a fact that the man Hadj Abdi—" he waved a pudgy hand in the old man's direction, but did not alter his stare into space—"that Hadj Abdi, Bou Hamid's servant, knows the secret of the hiding place of this treasure. I suspect also that you Americans——"

He stopped abruptly, obviously catching himself in a lapse of logic. Belief was not fact.

"It is a fact that, having secured the knowledge of the treasure, I have placed you all in my power, beyond all hope—" he stressed the word slightly, and repeated it—"beyond all hope of relief. And the most important fact of all is this: One by one you will be called upon to reveal the hiding place of this treasure. I shall follow a certain procedure to gain this information, beginning with Hadj Abdi. If he should die without giving me the information I shall continue the procedure with Mr. Starr, and so on. Of course if you should all prefer to die rather than to tell me what I intend to discover, it will not mean that I shall not secure the treasure. The basha will not interfere. But I do not think that any of you will die—it will be so much more——" He hesitated for a moment and suddenly he glared from one to the other of his captives—"it will be so much less painful to give me the information."

He clapped his fat hands, and in answer to the summons two stalwart negroes entered, closing the door behind them. The intimation of the German's long discourse was clear. He meant to torture them, one after the other, in order to force from some one of them a confession as to the hiding place of Bou Hamid's gold. And these two blacks were to be the torturers.

At a command from the German, who was now leaning back lazily against the cushions and who had lighted a stinking cigar, such as is made in Germany, the blacks seized Hadj Abdi, one on either side, and lifted him roughly to his feet. That the old man was still weak from his brutal treatment at the hands of the basha was quite apparent. His old knees would scarcely bear him upright—yet the glare of anger and defiance in his old eyes gave lie to the possible thought that they were weak with fear. The two blacks untied the rope which held his wrists and pulled his arms around behind him, raising them upward by their wrists towards his neck. The old man sucked in his breath between clenched jaws and he bent forward to release the strain upon his arm sockets. With a brutal laugh one of the blacks swung in behind him and put his knee against Hadj Abdi's back, straightening him up. The Hadji groaned and the sweat of pain began to bead his face.

"More," demanded the German, grinning, and exhaling his cigar smoke with slow pleasure.

THE two blacks, in obedience to the command of their master, lifted, and for a moment Hadj Abdi swung, his feet clear of the floor, from his twisted arms. Then there was a slight crack, as though of a match broken between fingers, and a groan was forced from the old man's throat.

"Will you speak?" demanded the German, glaring at Hadj Abdi with his eyes, but grinning with his lips, as some animals grin.

Silence was his reply.

"Tear his arms out, if necessary," the German snarled.

Drummond Bell, watching Starr, and combing his mind madly for some scheme of saving Hadj Abdi from this torture, saw Starr struggle to his knees, despite his bound ankles and despite his bound wrists, spring upon the German. He himself followed Starr's example, but before he could do more than get to his knees, he saw Starr kicked back by the German, who had planted his foot against the figure he saw falling towards him. Starr rolled over and over and came to rest at last almost beside Drummond Bell, and the artist again resumed his seat. What could they two do, tied as they were? It was folly to attempt anything.

He looked again towards Hadj Abdi, and

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aw that now, while one big negro pinioned his arms, the other fished around inside his own *djellaba* as though seeking something. When his hand was withdrawn it grasped a knife.

"First his fingers," snarled the German—the little finger first, and then if he does not speak, his eyelids—so that—" he cackled with laughter—"so that he may better see the wisdom of confession."

The big black with the knife seized one of Hadj Abdi's little fingers, stretched the arm out and made a swift sawing motion with the knife. There was the disgusting grate of steel on bone, another groan from Hadj Abdi, and the negro, with a deep bellow of laughter held out the severed finger before Hadj Abdi's eyes and squeezed the blood from it as one might squeeze water from a sponge. The old man looked at it a moment, straightened his wracked shoulders, threw back his head, and eyeing his torturer with a dignity which made that beast look away, raised his arm and extended it towards the black.

"Proceed with the next one," he commanded, and his voice was strong.

But here Drummond Bell interrupted.

"Tell him, Hadj Abdi," he cried. "For ——sake tell him what he wants to know."

"Tell him," echoed Starr. "All the gold on earth isn't worth this."

But Hadj Abdi shook a defiant old head.

"My promise was given to Bou Hamid," he answered, "and Bou Hamid is no longer here to release me from it."

He moved his arm with its bleeding stump impatiently again before the black.

"Why do *you* not tell me what I intend to learn?" the harsh voice of the German questioned Drummond Bell— "Or you?" he turned to Starr.

Both were about to make the obvious reply when the same thought occurred to them: they could not confess ignorance without showing the German that his only hope lay in Hadj Abdi—and what horrors would he then conceive to inflict upon the old man.

"You see that the Americans do not know the secret—so proceed with this matter," the level voice of Hadj Abdi broke the painful impassé, "a promise is a bigger thing than the words which gave it. I shall not tell."

But the German appeared to be anything save convinced that Hadj Abdi's words were true. He glared at each captive in turn, and said:

"As for the Americans—whether they know or not, I will make perfectly sure—when their turn comes." And then to the blacks— "Continue."

Again the black seized one of Hadj Abdi's fingers and stretched it taut, again the blackened knife was raised—and then the door was flung open, a man stepped inside and kicked it to behind him, and while two blue six-guns covered the German and the two blacks, a quiet deep voice announced—

"The show is over."

The German sat gasping with open mouth, his cigar, fallen from his paralyzed hand, burning a hole in the rug. The blacks swung about, looked into the muzzle of a pistol and were struck motionless, while the knife clattered to the floor.

Drummond Bell and Starr stared with a mixture of amazement and pleasure at the man behind the guns. And over the guns Tex Lane gave them a reassuring grin.

XIII

THRUSTING his left hand pistol into one of the holsters beneath his coat, Tex Lane stooped to pick up the knife which the big black had dropped. The German, watching him, took advantage of that fraction of a second when the American's glance was lowered to the knife. With a motion unexpectedly swift in one of his obesity, he thrust one hand behind him and drew forth a wicked looking automatic.

But quick as he had been, both in perception and in action, "Tex" Lane was quicker. The American fired from his stooping posture, and the pistol, revolving like a pinwheel, spun up over the German's head, while the man who had held it uttered a cry of pain and terror, and grasped a bleeding right hand in a trembling left.

Their master's action had been a signal to the two big negroes, but the crash of the American's gun was an even more powerful one. They took one step towards Lane, then stopped, for the American, after the one shot which had disarmed the German, had stood erect and the smoking muzzle of his pistol waved slowly back and forth between the two pairs of negro eyes. Thus covering them, Lane strode over to Drummond Bell and severed the ropes which

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bound him; then he did the same for Starr, exercising care in the cutting.

"Now," he said, "if you boys will take those ropes and tie up these fellows, while I keep them covered, we will be able to take things more easily."

"This bird here," said Drummond Bell, picking up the rope and going swiftly to the German, "is my meat. I'd a —— sight rather shoot him than tie him up—but maybe we can do that later." And then to the German, "Stick out your hands."

But the fat man whined disagreeably.

"Do not tie my hands," he pleaded. "One of them is shot to pieces."

"Stick 'em out," growled Bell. "Let's look."

Reluctantly the German obeyed. Drummond Bell looked.

"Rats!" he said. "It's not shot to pieces —not half as much as Hadj Abdi's is. It's nothing but a scratch."

Despite whining protests he tied the German's wrists securely. Turning then to see what the others were doing, he was forced to laugh.

Starr had forced the two big negroes against each other, face to face, and had tied the hands of each behind the back of the other—so that they seemed to be clasped in a double embrace of great friendship, a bear-hug which was extremely ludicrous. As Starr, with a huge grin upon his face, completed the job and stepped back, and looked for approval from Lane to Drummond Bell and back again to Lane, the latter holstered his other pistol and turned to Hadj Abdi, who was squatting in a corner watching the scene with startled and disbelieving old eye. It was the work of a moment to tie up the mutilated hand—the flow of blood had cleansed it sufficiently, they knew, to make sterilization unnecessary—and when this was done Lane boyishly seized the old man by his shoulders and shook him gently.

"You'll be right as a fiddle in a day or two," he said in Spanish.

The old man shook his head in negation.

"No," he denied, "it is written that the rest of my days are few in number. A few weeks, *inshallah*. Not because of this," he glanced at the bandaged hand in his lap, "but—here." He raised his uninjured hand to his chest.

"Why, have you been hurt there?" asked Lane.

The old man nodded, but Drummond Bell answered the question.

"Hurt!" he growled. "That devil of a basha had him sewed up two days in raw cowhide. You know what that will do."

Lane looked with widening eyes at Hadj Abdi and whistled.

"And—and you still live!" he exclaimed.

"By the grace of Allah, I still live," rejoined Hadj Abdi. "And by the grace of Allah I shall live a few days longer—but not many. It is well—Bou Hamid is gone and my work is finished."

There was a finality in the old man's voice which excluded discussion; in the minds of Bell and Starr he had been dead; that he should return to that condition seemed not at all strange. And to Lane, the old man's premonition of impending death was far less impressive than the fact that he had survived the basha's torture.

"As for the basha," he said, "I think that our score with him will assuredly be settled. It is not fit that he should continue to live."

"I shot straight! I shot straight!"

The unexpected voice caused them to turn. The boy Yusef was sitting up now, gazing from one to another of them, but he spoke to his father, repeating his declaration of efficiency.

"Thrice I shot and thrice my bullets struck him," he declared. "Perhaps—perhaps Allah guided them to their mark."

The old Hadji looked to the face nearest him, that of Bell.

"He says he shot the basha thrice. Perhaps his head—" he paused.

"His head is all right," replied Bell. "Yes, he shot the basha thrice—or at least he shot at him three times. I was there and saw."

Briefly he told of the incident, forgetting, even as the boy apparently had forgotten, the presence of the German. Of this presence they were sharply reminded.

"Ho! ho! This will be fine news for his Excellency."

They turned toward the German, who cackled coarsely.

"There will be executions, no doubt. Assuredly the basha will now make certain that Hadj Abdi does not come to life again —and assuredly Hadj Abdi's son will accompany him to *El Hotama*."

"I—I had forgotten the German," stammered the boy, with fear in his eyes.

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Lane quickly reassured him.

"Have no fear, son," he said. "This fat swine will carry no tales. As a matter of fact," he turned a grim face upon the German, "as a matter of fact, I think it would be well to finish this matter now."

He drew a pistol and approached the fat man, who took one long look at the hard face of the American and cowered beneath the menacing glint of Lane's eyes.

"Oh—no, no," he cried. "You would not do that! You would not do that! I joked—I did not——"

"It's a —— of a poor joke," growled Lane, "and who the —— are you?"

His question manifestly set up a new train of thought in the German's mind, and he regained something of the self-control he had momentarily lost.

"I—I— Oh, you will learn soon enough who I am." Egotism came to his strengthening like wine. "I—I am Doktor Schloss—I belong to the German Legation in Tangier. I have protection. I have diplomatic standing. You can not injure me. I am a friend—a friend of most important personages. You would not dare——"

He came to an abrupt stop as the American's thumb drew back the hammer of the pistol.

"The —— I wouldn't!" said Lane. And then, more slowly, as though pondering each word, "The— —— —I—wouldn't." He turned to his friends. "By ——," he declared, "the more I think of it the better I like it. Would it—hm!—would it interfere with our business in any way?"

"Not so you could notice it," replied Drummond Bell promptly. "Go ahead and shoot!"

"*I* think," said Starr, "that it would be a distinct advantage. That bird was so sure of facts a little while ago, that he might like another one to chew on."

"Yeh," drawled Drummond Bell, "he don't believe in anything else. Consequently it won't hurt him—because the belief that he is going to die and the imagination as to what will happen to him afterwards don't count."

But with a look at the fat Doktor Schloss and a shrug of disgust, Lane returned his pistol to its holster.

"I don't like to dirty my gun shooting him," he said. "Let him live—for the present. Now somebody give me a cigaret and tell me about things. Where's Coventry Stewart, and where's Zollern?"

"Stewart," answered Drummond Bell, giving him the required cigaret and holding a match to it— "This may be news to you, too, Starr. Coventry Stewart is a prisoner of Abdulkhader, at the basha's palace."

"What?" exclaimed Starr. "A—prisoner of the basha! Then he didn't—"

"Double-cross us as Zollern said," Drummond Bell's voice was disdainful. "Not for one holy minute. I don't know why the basha held him—but he did."

"How did you find out, and when?" demanded Starr.

"The night that you and Zollern were captured here in the garden," explained Bell. "I was on top of the wall just about to follow you, when Yusef called to me. I slid off the wall—but on the other side—and we made our escape. Later the boy gave me one of Coventry Stewart's cigarets which had been passed on to him while he was in the basha's palace trying to find out what had become of his father, and inside the cigaret was a message from Stewart. It didn't say much—but I take it this bird here—" he waved towards Doktor Schloss, "was in cahoots with the basha. But *I* think he was double-crossing Abdulkhader."

"Then—then the story that Zollern told us——" Starr began, and paused.

"Right!" retorted the artist. "Zollern sold out—and to this bird here, I reckon."

"But—but he was captured at the same time I was," offered Starr.

"Sure," agreed Drummond Bell mildly. "But things are not always what they seem, as the poet sayeth. We know he lied about Coventry Stewart—lied to get us to come to the garden where we were to be captured. You can't make anything else of it then that his capture was a fake. As a matter of fact, you can't make anything of it except that he and this Doktor Swine here were in cahoots to get us out of the way, force Hadj Abdi or us to reveal the hiding place of the treasure and get away with it themselves. As for the basha and Coventry Stewart, I suspect, although of course I don't know, that the fat personage groaning to himself over there either had the basha in a political hole where he could do what he wanted with him—and incidentally force him to hold Stewart a prisoner—or else offered him a cut of the loot."

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"But where is Zollern now, then?" asked Lane.

Drummond Bell shrugged his shoulders and stared with speculative eyes at Doktor Schloss.

"I don't know," he repeated at last, after a space. "But I would make a guess that if Zollern and Doktor Schloss were ever to split any treasure between them, it would be because neither of them could double-cross the other. And as the Doktor seems to have been running the show here in the house of Bou Hamid—well, I'd bet a nickel that he has given Zollern the double-cross and that we will find our little friend locked up somewhere about the place, wondering what it's all about."

"Let's take a look," suggested Lane. "I'd sort of like to see that baby."

"Good enough," agreed Starr. "We'll look around. But first, old man, tell us how you happened to show up here with the governor's reprieve, like an angel from heaven—and all that sort of thing?"

"I can tell it in fifty words," replied Lane. "I happened to be in New York at the same time you fellows were, and your message was forwarded to me there, but I didn't get it until your boat had sailed. I took a boat two days later—and kept about two days behind you all the way. Learned what I needed to know in Tangier; came on to El K'sar today, and of course looked up the house of Bou Hamid the first thing. Saw a light here and as the door wasn't quite closed, I investigated what was going on, and thought it was time for a little gun-play. That," he concluded, "is the simple story of my recent life."

"I'll say we were lucky," said Bell. "Let's go find Zollern. Hadj Abdi and Yusef can admire these fellows while we are gone; they are safely tied, you can bet."

Old Hadj Abdi nodded assent and the three Americans departed on their search.

IT WAS not difficult to find their former friend. By the simple process of investigating every room as they came to it, they eventually found one, the door of which was barred on the outside, which, by the footsteps they could hear, they knew to be occupied even before they swung the portal open. As the door swung inward a figure hurtled into them from the darkness. Big Tex Lane's strong arms seized it and held it despite its struggles.

"You don't want to run away," said Lane gently, as the struggles ceased somewhat. "Oh no, Fritzie, my boy, you want to stay right here and have a little reunion with your old friends."

There was a gasp from the struggling man and resistance redoubled.

"Lane," he growled. "Lane, eh? Where the —— did you come from? Let me loose."

"'Out of the nowhere into the here,'" quoted Lane softly. "Very much into the here, Fritzie, my boy. Now none of that!"

With a quick motion he twisted one of Zollern's arms upward behind his back. And pushing him forward, he led the way back to the room they had recently quitted.

"There is some one here I know you will like to meet," observed Lane as they crossed the threshold. "I'm sure it will be a happy reunion, everything considered."

As they stepped into the light of the room, Zollern observed its occupants with quick, suspicious glances, and when he saw the figure of Doktor Schloss he cursed harshly and wrenched free from the grip of Tex Lane. Three strides and he stood before the frightened German, shouting curses and accusations.

"You —— double-crosser! You sneak! You dog! You did know about the gold! Tried to get away with it all, eh? I'll—I'll——"

And now the Doktor retorted with equal vehemence.

"You will do nothing. Nothing! You are nobody. You are nothing. I used you, yes, as I would use a slave. What are you but a cheap spy—my inferior. One word to the American Government——"

"Silence!" screamed Fritz Zollern. "Silence, you ——!"

He plunged forward, seized the pistol half hidden behind the cushions and before any one of the Americans could reach him, had thrust it against the bosom of Doktor Schloss and pulled the trigger. There was a muffled roar. Zollern jumped back, and turning the pistol upon his former friends, leaped towards the door. He paused for a moment upon the threshold, his face distorted, his eyes gleaming insanely.

"Stop him! For —— sake stop him!" cried Starr. And, lowering his voice: "He'll go to the basha."

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"Stop me! Stop me!" cried Zollern. "You can't stop me!" His voice was wild and shrill.

With the speed of a flash of light Tex Lane made the attempt. His right hand moved and there came a flash of yellow flame and a reverberating crash as he fired through the bottom of his holster in an attempt to disable Zollern. The man on the threshold stiffened, swaying a little, and he made a quick gesture towards his left shoulder with the hand which held the gun. But despite the fact that he had been hit—almost, it seemed, at the flash of the gun—he leapt into the darkness. The others ran to the doorway, into the courtyard. But there, although a black figure could be seen running into the distance, Lane shook his head and holstered his gun.

"I can't shoot at that," he said. "Chances are I'd kill him. We'll just have to take the consequences as they come."

"And that means," said Drummond Bell, with a sigh, "that the basha and his men will be here in less than half an hour. And also, I reckon, that the German wins."

XIV

THAT Fritz Zollern would proceed with all speed to the basha and lay before him the real story of the treasure, seemed probable, inevitable.

It was apparent to all now that Doktor Schloss, through the German spy system in Morocco—of which he was probably the head—had learned facts which had given him either actual knowledge or a very definite suspicion concerning the reason for the presence in the city of the three Americans; that fortune had favored him in that he had a terrible hold over one of them, Fritz Zollern, upon whom they could now only look with more disgust than anger as a traitor to them and to the country in which he bore citizenship; and that through this hold upon him Doktor Schloss had forced him to impart what he knew of the secret, and then to betray his friends. After which, it seemed very clear, the worthy Doktor had double-crossed his tool as cold-bloodedly as he had preached his philosophical doctrine before ordering the torture of old Hadj Abdi, whom, it seemed, he had been able to rescue, by some trick of circumstance, from his raw-hide cloak of agony, only to add to his previous torture.

And now Fritz Zollern, with his soul burdened by unprofitable betrayal of his friends and by the shooting of the man who had used him, obviously had but one recourse, one hope: If he could reach the ears of the basha, excite him with facts concerning the treasure, point out that Doktor Schloss was no longer alive, and that there was only a force of three Americans to overcome before the treasure should be theirs, then no doubt the basha, unless Yusef's bullets prevented, very shortly would descend upon the house of Bou Hamid with a force which would make resistance futile.

"My ——!" exclaimed Starr. "Coventry Stewart!"

Tex Lane whistled between his teeth and Drummond Bell cried—

"Cripes, yes!"

In truth the situation of the Englishman now appeared to be serious in the extreme. While up to the present the basha had been holding him prisoner, according to what they had gleaned, as a favor to Doktor Schloss, or perhaps because he found it desirable to obey the orders of the Doktor, the arrival of Fritz Zollern with his story would put a different face upon the matter. The basha would learn that his prisoner was one of those who sought the treasure. Perhaps he would resort to extreme measures in the attempt to force information from Coventry Stewart's lips. A captivity which had been rather more than annoying would be followed by a captivity filled with deadly menace.

The three Americans looked at each other and shook their heads in uncertainty.

"We've got to thrash this out," said Lane, after a while. "Let's go back to the house. But first let's bar these gates—and then we'll put Yusef on guard."

They closed the great doors and drew the heavy bars into place then returned to the room wherein the events of the last hour had taken place. As they entered the eyes of all three sought the figure of Doktor Schloss, but not in doubt, only in confirmation. What they had foreseen they found: the German had fallen sidewise and now lay quiet and ashen-faced. A great black star disfigured his breast—a decoration, Drummond Bell thought, in the Order of Infamy—and the wide eyes were staring but visionless.

Yusef, squatting upon the floor with his revolver pointing towards the corner where

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the blacks still hugged each other, cast a glance at the Americans and another at the body of Doktor Schloss. He shrugged his small shoulders and twitched a hand in an upward semicircle.

"Pfft! *Se fuel*" he said calmly. "He gone." His motion gave the impression of an ascending sky rocket.

"Like basha," added the boy. And then in Arabic— "The two shall sup together in *El Hotama*."

"You think the basha is dead?" asked Starr. "I am afraid not, although I wish he were."

But the boy nodded his head decisively.

"I shot straight," he declared. "I shot straight."

"But the basha was able still to ride a horse," pointed out Drummond Bell.

The boy shook his head, unconvinced.

"Dead," he repeated. "Dead like this," and a brown finger pointed at the deceased German.

"Nonsense," replied Bell, and turning to his companions, "What's the program?"

Tex Lane strode to a corner and seated himself, followed by the others.

"To me it looks like this," he said. "We've got to plan to resist a raid by the basha, and we've got to try to help Coventry Stewart. Now, the first is bad enough. It will be pretty difficult for us to guard the wall. In fact, I don't think there is any use attempting it, unless the attack is concentrated at one point. It probably will be at first—probably at the gate. We can take care of that. But when they scatter—that will be the signal to surrender the garden and fight from inside the house. This house is a fortress, like most Moorish houses. Probably intended to be. But look here—" he turned to Hadj Abdi, and asked a question. "Didn't Bou Hamid have any guns—pistols or rifles—any kind of guns?"

Hadj Abdi nodded his head quickly.

"I hid them," he said, "in a secret vault in the house wall," and followed his statement with quick words to Yusef.

The boy rose and left the room, returning shortly with two rifles and a holstered pistol, which he tendered to Lane; and from the hood of his *djellaba* he extracted boxes of ammunition.

Lane's eyes gleamed as he examined the guns.

"Fine!" he exclaimed. "Fine! Late models and in good shape. Guess we can make a fight in the garden after all—although the house is our best bet."

He made certain that the magazines of the rifles were filled and at the insistence of Drummond Bell and Starr, assumed charge of the defense, outlining his plan and assigning them to certain steps in the event of attack.

"And now how about Coventry Stewart?"

"You know," said Bell slowly, "I've been thinking about Stewart—and the basha. It strikes me that the basha won't bother Stewart until after he has been to visit us. At any rate, if I were the basha I would just make sure that Stewart was safely locked up and then I'd beat it ——bent-for-election to this house, before anybody had time to get away with or without the treasure."

"That sounds reasonable," agreed Starr, nodding. "Yes. Of course he might cross-examine Stewart first."

"Possibly," agreed the artist. "I don't think so, but even if he does—well, can't Stewart take care of a cross-examination? Surely the basha won't waste time on an inquisition."

"I think Bell's right," broke in Tex Lane. "That would be my procedure, and I think that's what the basha will do. And more than that, here's a point that just occurred to me: We can't do anything to help Stewart so long as the basha and Zollern are at the palace, that's a cinch. But after they have left the palace—we might have a chance."

"You mean?" questioned Bell.

"I mean that after the attack starts here, one of us might break away and beat it to the basha's palace and perhaps be able to help Stewart. I don't imagine many people will be left there—so a man might be able to get away with it if all the luck in the world ran at his elbow."

"Right!" exclaimed Drummond Bell. "I think you have hit upon our only chance. A slim one, at that. Force is no good. Only luck and quick wit will accomplish anything. But it's all we can do."

"Looks that way to me, too," agreed Starr. "Of course, it will be taking long odds, but what else can we do?"

"Let's call it arranged then," said Bell, "and—" he hesitated—"suppose you fellows let me carry the message to Garcia."

Lane and Starr looked speculatively at the little artist, reflecting that it was highly

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injudicious to judge a man's nerve from his height or weight.

"Why you little old fightin' bear-cat!" exclaimed Lane at last. "What for you pickin' out the most dangerous job?" He grinned at Starr. "What do you reckon he'd be if he weighed another hundred pounds? Lawsy! Lawsy!"

Starr grinned in reply. And then his face grew serious.

"I think we should draw lots for it," he said. "Although I am also perfectly willing to go."

"Nothing doing," replied Bell shortly. "First come first served. Unless—" He looked from one to the other quickly. "—unless you think I can't get away with it."

"——, no! We don't think that," answered Lane. "We just don't want you to—"

He hesitated and realized that because of his superior size, and perhaps because Drummond Bell was an artist, he was taking an attitude of protection towards him. Then he laughed.

"All right! All right!" he said. "Go ahead. You're it." He turned to Starr. "You know," he observed, "I'd rather run into a bear any day than a mountain cat. Our little friend here is like one of these dum-dum bullets: they don't *look* any more dangerous than an ordinary bullet, but when they hit—Lawsy! Lawsy!—the hole they make!"

XV

BUT the fun was brief, and the serious business of preparing the plan of defense was again taken up in earnest. An hour passed while they examined the garden and the walls, picking out strategic positions and arranging for the retreat to the house which they knew must follow in the face of a divided attack. They examined the house itself and planned their operations step by step. And when this was done they devoted a short time to the disposal of the body of Doktor Schloss and locked the two blacks up in the little chamber which had served as Starr's prison. Then they seated themselves to await developments, somewhat surprized that the basha and his men had not yet arrived.

But they had scarcely seated themselves when Hadj Abdi came and seated himself with them.

"My friends," he said, "before things begin to happen—and we do not know what the result to any of us will be—I think I should tell you the secret of the treasure. Perhaps—" he shrugged philosophically—"perhaps it will be of no use to any of us; still it is better that you should know. The treasure—but come, I will show you. Have you a light?"

Lane took from his pocket a little electric flash and handed it to the old man.

"Come then," said Hadj Abdi. "Come and I will show you."

They followed him into the star-sprinkled darkness of the garden until they came to the little court where Starr and Zollern had been captured the preceding night. A few paces away from the court was a dark object upon which Hadj Abdi directed the rays of the flashlight. They saw that the object was the remains of an old pump surmounting what was apparently the cover of a well. Shrubbery grew all about and even partially covered the pump. Handing the light to Drummond Bell Hadj Abdi leaned over, pushed away the vines, and then lifted out a small board.

"Give me the light again," he requested, "and look."

He thrust the light through the hole left by the removal of the board, and the Americans gathered to look into the well. Like quicksilver the water reflected the light of the electric torch—water, and nothing else.

But his meaning was clear: beneath the water in the well lay the golden treasure of Bou Hamid.

"Who," inquired Hadj Abdi softly, "who would seek in a well for anything save water?" He smiled up into their faces. "And this water," he added, "is known to work evil effects upon those who drank it last. I think—" his smile broadened, "I think Bou Hamid put into it certain medicines of which he knew."

He replaced the board and drew the vines over it again and rose.

"My duty is done, my friends," he said. "When—" he hesitated—"when other matters are over, you will know where to find the gold. The pumping out of the water will be a small task—and the bottom of the well is lined with stone."

They returned to the house then to await

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developments. Another hour passed without results save to cause them to wonder why the attack was delayed, to resume their worry concerning Coventry Stewart. And when a third hour was nearly ended the suspense had become hard indeed.

Drummond Bell chucked away a half-smoked cigaret and jumped to his feet.

"I tell you," he said, "that I'm not going to wait any longer. You fellows can take care of this place if there should be an attack, but it looks as though there wasn't going to be, tonight. My ——! That devil of a basha—and Zollern is no better—may be torturing old Coventry while we sit here twiddling our thumbs." He hitched his holstered pistol backward a little, "I'm going."

"But," objected Starr, "what can you do if Zollern and the basha and the basha's men are all there? Our plan," he pointed out, "depended upon the absence of the basha and his men."

"I know," agreed Bell shortly. "But to —— with that! Our plan also involved a prompt attack from the basha, but it hasn't materialized. I'm going."

But at this point Tex Lane held up a detaining hand.

"Wait a minute," he said. "Wait—a—minute—old bear-cat," he grinned at Drum an' Bells and in his eyes was affection. "When you change one thing about a plan you usually have to change others. I, personally, didn't very much like the idea of you going alone to the basha's palace, even if the basha wasn't there—but I don't like it at all this way. After all, about the only reason we wanted to defend this place was because of the gold. At first it looked as though we might do two things —protect the gold and help Stewart. Now it looks as though we could do only one thing—go to Stewart's aid."

"Certainly!" Drummond Bell's voice was almost a groan. "That's what I've been trying to tell you. To —— with the gold!"

Tex Lane nodded his head slowly.

"Yeah," he agreed. "To —— with the gold. Maybe it will keep anyhow. And as for protecting ourselves—well, maybe we can do it just as well somewhere else. No doubt Hadj Abdi and Yusef can find a hiding place where they will be safe, and if the basha hasn't found the gold yet, maybe he won't find it even if he searches the house."

"Let's go," urged Drummond Bell. "Let's go."

"Bell's right," agreed Starr. "I don't like the looks of things. I'm beginning to get scared about Stewart."

Their plan was quickly communicated to Hadj Abdi and Yusef, and it was decided that the old man and his son should seek refuge elsewhere, taking the rifles with them for their own protection and surrendering the boy's revolver to the Americans, since small guns were best for close work and rifles could not be concealed. Then the three Americans crossed the courtyard and Starr laid hands upon the bars which held the gate.

As he did so there came from the distance the sound of a horse's swift feet. Starr stayed his hand and they listened. The sound drew nearer. Soon it was certain that the rider came to the house of Bou Hamid. The deeper thud of the horse's hoofs upon the wooden culvert was heard.

"One only," said Starr, dropping the wooden bar. "Ready!"

"Ready," answered the others, and Starr threw open the gate.

XVI

BUT even as they stepped forward, pistols in hand, a shout came from the rider.

"Starr! Bell!"

Shouting in reply they came forward to surround Coventry Stewart.

"We—we were just going after you," Drummond Bell told him, and his voice was happy.

"Just starting," said Starr. "We were—" But he was interrupted by the deep voice of Coventry Stewart.

"Well! Well!" cried the Englishman. "It's Lane, isn't it? This *is* a surprize." He seized the big man by the arms and squeezed them. "Didn't know you were here."

"He came just in time to save a ticklish situation," explained Starr. "And he surely surprized us."

"Mighty glad you're here," boomed Lane. "Mighty glad! We were worried stiff. We thought Zollern and the basha would be down upon us like a bat out of hell—and that they wouldn't bother you for the time being. But when they didn't come—"

"Zollern?" queried Stewart. "I don't

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follow you. Why was *he* going to the basha?"

"Well, you see—but it's a long story," said Lane. "Let's go back to the house; we can rest easier now."

They returned, explained the change in plans to Hadj Abdi and Yusef—the old man almost wept when Coventry Stewart grasped his hand in greeting—and proceeded to acquaint Stewart with the many things he did not know concerning the affairs of the past few days. And when the questions and answers and exclamations and comments had died down, Coventry Stewart smiled whimsically and said,

"Well, you boys surely have had more than your share of the fun. At first I suspected why the basha was holding me prisoner, and later I learned positively why. He had been accepting money from the German government, through Doktor Schloss, to stir up discontent against the Sultan—treason, in short. And strangely enough—" he paused a moment, then went on—"there is only one piece of news which I can contribute to our general knowledge. The basha's treason to the sultan had been discovered, and a new basha arrived with his men in El K'sar late tonight, to take Abdulkhader prisoner and assume control of the town. Abdulkhader, however—"

They were interrupted by the voice of the boy Yusef, who at first mention of Abdulkhader, had turned to look at them. At the second mention now, he spoke quietly.

"Abdulkhader is dead."

Coventry Stewart looked at him with a puzzled smile.

"Hmph!" he said. "How do you know?"

"I shot straight," answered the boy. "I shot straight."

Coventry Stewart nodded.

"Yes," he agreed, "you shot straight. Abdulkhader is dead."

The news seemed to make no impression upon the boy, who merely nodded as with assured knowledge, but its effect upon the Americans was different. Abdulkhader, the basha, their enemy, was out of the problem!

"Yes," continued Coventry Stewart, "he died just before the new basha arrived to arrest him. And the new basha—" he looked from one to the other of his friends and smiled. "This will be good news to you," he said. "The new basha is Kaïd Hammada, of El Arache, an old friend of mine, and as straight as a string. I think perhaps it was well for Abdulkhader that he died as he did; his successor was much angered when he found that I was being held a prisoner in the palace. He released me at once, of course, and not only that, but he assured me that we could count upon his aid in every way."

"You—does he know why we are here?" questioned Starr.

Coventry Stewart nodded acquiescence.

"Yes," he confirmed his nod. "Yes. He is a white man in every sense of the word. I would trust him—well, I trust him as I trust you. I have known him for thirty years intimately. And he and Bou Hamid were real friends. Therefore I told him. I hope you do not feel——"

"No, no," Lane interrupted him. "That was a wise thing to do."

The Englishman found the same thought expressed in the faces of Starr and Bell.

"We would have had trouble otherwise," continued Lane, "in getting the gold out of the country. Abdulkhader would have fought us every foot of the way—that is, if he had not died. But even if he were dead there were no doubt others who would be equally dangerous. Zollern, for example."

"I think we can take care of Zollern, and the gold as well, now," said Coventry Stewart. "I can hardly believe that Zollern is—well—what he is. However—" He dismissed the distasteful subject with a shrug. "However, he will make no headway now, I think. He had not seen Kaïd Hammada, that I know. No doubt he learned of the death of Abdulkhader and took time to consider."

"No doubt," agreed Lane. "No doubt that is it. Well—" he stretched his huge arms and yawned greatly. "I've got an idea it's bed-time. Me, I'm going to hit the hay—or what corresponds to hay in this neck of the woods."

"Three rousing cheers," said Drummond Bell, "and a tiger! The motion is carried."

They found cushions upon which to sleep in other rooms, and shortly the house of Bou Hamid was silent save for a sound indicative of sleeping humans.

It seemed to them all as though they had scarcely gotten to sleep when they were awakened, in broad daylight, by a hammering upon the oak gates. Coventry Stewart went to answer the summons, and returned shortly to his friends, who were

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rubbing the sleep from their eyes, a letter in his hand.

"From the new basha," he said briefly, as he broke the seal. While they waited in silence he read the brief message. Then he nodded his head slowly and his lips compressed before he spoke.

"Fritz Zollern," he said, "has passed on. He was shot and killed last night in what appears to have been an insane attempt to gain access to the basha. He tried to force his way with a gun, and shot a guard before he himself was killed. And so the book of his life is closed."

"It is better so," said Lane sincerely. "Better so."

And that his opinion was also that of Drummond Bell and Morton Starr was manifest by their deliberate nods.

"I think that this wipes from our path the last obstacle," said Coventry Stewart. "All that remains, I think, is to pack the gold. The basha will give us a strong and reliable guard for the journey to Tangier. And, oh yes—there was one other matter referred to in the basha's letter. He states that he is officially proclaiming pardon for the unknown person or persons responsible for the death of Abdulkhader."

"Fine!" exclaimed "Drum an' Bells." "We must tell Yusef. Yusef! Yusef!" he shouted. "*Ajhil Ajhil!*"

The boy hastened to them.

"Tell him," said Drummond Bell, and Stewart did so.

The boy listened without emotion. Only nodding his head to show understanding, but the motion seemed also to suggest that there could have been no other outcome. When Stewart had ceased the boy answered him briefly in Arabic.

"Will you—will you thank the basha for me—if you tell him who did it?" he asked slowly. "I think he is a good man, and—and I am glad I shot straight."

. . . . . .

THE *Celtic* from Gibraltar to New York, with many small boxes of Moorish gold in her safe, began the plowing of her great furrow westward across the gray Atlantic. On her deck the three Americans watched the mist-turbaned Rock of Gibraltar sink beneath the waves, the picture still in their minds' eye of Coventry Stewart standing upon the little tender which had brought them to their ship, waving his walking-stick in farewell, and beside him Hadj Abdi and the boy Yusef, gazing their good-bys without gesture.

The adventure was finished; the desires of their dead friend, Bou Hamid, had been complied with; the seeds planted ten years before had grown into a harvest, and the harvest had been reaped.

And so they sailed towards their homeland and all that it offered to wealth and friendship, leaving behind them, beneath a slab of rock in a little fenced enclosure they had purchased in El K'sar, the only one of them whose name fate had marked off the records.

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RICHARD THE LION-HEARTED

by F. R. Buckley

IN THE annals of the Middle Ages there appear so many kings and nobles who were decent fellows in spite of fashions and facilities to the contrary, that the average school-book historian's choice of heroes becomes almost incomprehensible, except on the assumption of a malicious whimsicality. A case in point is that of Richard I of England—almost universally put into the school Valhalla under his self-given name of "the Lion-Hearted"; than whom, I should think, no more abominable blackguard ever lived. He did, it is true, perform prodigies of violence during the Third Crusade; but this pious sortie was preceded by a most treacherous and brutal rebellion against his own father, the good King Henry II; it was financed by a commanded massacre of Jews in England; it was accompanied by the massacre, in cold blood, of five thousand Moslem hostages; and it was followed by innumerable outrages of which one—directed against the Church Richard is famed for defending—seems particularly ironic. The clergy demurred about paying a confiscatory tax on their lands; and Richard immediately made proclamation that in future his courts, civil and criminal, would ignore all causes and complaints brought by ecclesiastics. And it is probable, from what his contemporaries say of this king, that Lion-Heart himself was foremost in the land-grabbing which ensued before the clergy could submit.

His morals, reflected in his treatment of his unfortunate queen, Berengaria, are quite beyond detailed description; and his avarice—an unheroic vice—led him at last into the quarrel which caused his death.

He had bled his French and English possessions almost white, by taxes and by mean tricks such as the revocation and resale of all land-titles; but when he heard that a treasure had been found on the domains of a vassal, the Viscount of Limoges, he immediately claimed the whole of it. The Viscount had already sent him the lion's share, and was indisposed to part with more. So Richard gathered a mercenary army and without further ado, marched on the stronghold of Chaluz. His royal name, which had already attained the distinction of being used by Moslem mothers as a terrifier of their babies, was sufficient in this case, too; the stronghold wished to surrender; which offer the chivalrous hero refused. He had been put to a great deal of trouble, and he announced that nothing would recompense him but the pleasure of hanging every man within the walls. And he did hang every one of them, except a young archer named Bertrand de Gourdon; who, during the assault, had shot him through the shoulder with an arrow.

Obviously—to his contemporaries—Richard designed to save this offender for a more agonizing death than hanging; but later historians have used the reprieve as the basis for a most engaging cock-and-bull story about the royal ruffian's magnanimity. He is alleged to have spared de Gourdon's life "because he was only obeying orders and doing his duty"; whereas the fact is that, an hour after the arrow-wound (combined with Richard's debaucheries) had proved fatal, the archer was flayed alive; thus joining his father and two brothers, all of whom owed their deaths to the Lion-Hearted.

The nearest authentic approach to the magnanimity legend has for its hero Louis VIII of France; who, after the siege of Fontenoy, refused to hang a hundred knights who had fought against him, on the ground that they had only obeyed the command of their immediate liege-lord, as it was their duty to do. But this gallant gesture, alas! suffers on closer inspection. Louis had already avenged his dignity rather thoroughly by razing the city; and, anyhow, he was in a cleft stick. That campaign had been undertaken for the purpose of forcing Louis' immediate vassals to obey him; so that, if he had hanged the hundred knights, for their obedience, he would in effect have abandoned his whole contention.

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THE BORDER BREED

A Five-Part Story—Part III

by Hugh Pendexter

Author of "Rifle Rule," "The Homesteaders," etc.

The first part of the story briefly retold in story form

I WAS born and raised in Tennessee. My earliest recollection is that of a comfortable log cabin at McBee's Ferry, on the Holston. My father, Jeffry Lang, I knew but little, for he was much away, engaged in trade in the Chickasaw country, and he died in my fifth year. Soon afterward we moved to Knoxville, founded three years before. This town held splendid associations for me—its massive blockhouse, the sturdy stockade, the unbelievable—at that time—splendor of the governor's mansion. This was a fitting locale for the hair-raising recitals of the massacre at Cavet's Station in 1793.

Here I gained my first knowledge of the written word. Noah Webster's "Reader," the first book of its kind published on this side of the Atlantic, "Pilgrim's Progress," and DeFoe's endlessly diverting "Robinson Crusoe" composed my meager but satisfying library.

The stirring tales told by the travelers back from the West early fired my quick imagination and roused my latent wanderlust. At my first opportunity I hired out as assistant to a carter traveling to North Carolina. My premier passage through the lofty Cumberlands was largely disappointing, for we met nothing more exciting than a few wandering Cherokees in search of wild grapes. On my return from this trip I found that my mother had married Joel Snow, a rough but extremely fine type of frontiersman.

A close friendship grew up between my step-father and myself, and he taught me much about woodsmanship and marksmanship. Not long afterward my mother died, and Joel and I took to wandering toward the Mississippi, along whose mighty banks land was reputed to be exceptionally rich and fertile. It was Joel's idea to buy up land so that I might grow up to be a gentleman of leisure, as was befitting a youngster of my propensities and learning, the latter of which he, in his naiveté, stood greatly in awe of.

One day a strange morbidity clouded the usual geniality of my step-father. I wondered at the change in him—at the hunted look in his eye—but he refused to unburden himself because he wished to spare me all anxiety. He began to send me ahead on our journey "to scout a bit" and made me read every word of any paper he could lay his hands on.

At my importunate questioning Joel finally told me the cause of his uneasiness. He had once testified against The Dancer, one of a notorious band of border marauders known as Harpe's gang. The Dancer was said to have died in prison, but in reality he had escaped, and even now was stalking Joel for revenge. And since The Dancer never attacked except from behind and was one of the most treacherous of cutthroats, Joel feared him with cause enough.

So we began to travel stealthily by night, making our way toward Kentucky and the beautiful Ohio, where we knew The Dancer would not dare to follow, for there his reputation was too well known. Near Harrodsberg we fell in with Bully McGin and his impetuous daughter. McGin inveigled Joel to take part in Aaron Burr's wild scheme to seize Mexico from Spain—a plot promising untold wealth if successfully turned. I was left much in the company of "Princess" Polly McGin, who took a violent dislike to me from the first. On her dare we flatboated Shipping Port to try my marksmanship in a shooting contest, during which I unintentionally angered a drunken boatman, who promised to thrash me as soon as the contest was over.

BY DINT of excellent shooting and a capricious little trick on the part of Polly, I emerged victor of the contest and owner of a fat cow, which I immediately sold back to the promoter for twelve dollars. I still had the fight on my hands, for my superior marksmanship did not tend to soften the wrath of the drunken boatman. In the fight that ensued I soon realized that in the wrestling, bone-breaking style of fighting of the boatmen I should be much at a disadvantage, so I adopted the tactics that I learned from the carters—sidestepping and parrying solidly with the fists. The outcome was much in

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doubt until I was fortunate enough to land a terrific blow in the boatman's stomach. This suddenly dissipated his fight-lust for that day. Polly gloated over my double victory, and became almost amiable. We decided to buy books with the proceeds of my prize.

At this time McGin and Joel were away for many days at a time on some secret mission. I was annoyed that Joel should not let me into his secret, and being sated of my endless petty disputes with Polly, became very restless. I decided to find work of some sort.

Greenberry Spiller, a garrulous old vagabond and one-time preacher whom Joel met on one of his trips, suggested that we apply for work at the salt-mine at Mann's Lick, and much to Polly's disgust I became a salt-worker. It was back-breaking work, yet it proved interesting to me, for I was put to devious tasks, so that no one of them became unbearably monotonous. At times, however, I was sorely tempted to quit, but I was borne up by the unctious garrulity of Greenberry, who talked much more than he worked. Again, I did not care to be thought a quitter by Joel and the McGins.

One day I was sent to Shepardsville to collect an account. Greenberry, since he could not obtain leave to accompany me, threw up his job and came anyway. As we made our way along a secluded road, we heard a whining voice calling for help from some roadside bushes. I advanced to give aid when a long arm shot out from the bushes and I barely missed the thrust of a gleaming knife. I fired from my knees, but my assailant, whom I recognized as Dancer by his hunched-up right shoulder, made his escape.

When I told Joel of this cowardly attack, he grew visibly older. Though a brave man in all other respects, he was utterly slave to his fear of Dancer. Hereupon Greenberry decided our course of flight for us. His vivid word-pictures of the rich northern Ohio territory—the Promised Land, he termed it—would have enticed men far less gullible than ourselves. So we set out.

Breaking our way through almost impassable woodland, we found, instead of the flat lush meadows of Greenberry's stories, continuous wooded hills—woods so dense that the broiling noon-day sun penetrated but feebly through the thick forest roof. Finally Greenberry admitted that he had never been here before, but had been outrageously imposed upon by some lying scoundrel. We decided to make the best of a bad situation, and when, near the Vincennes post-road, we came upon a finely-equipped, but seemingly uninhabited cabin, we stopped to rest. A note left behind by Peters, the former occupant, made it clear that he had been scared away by the Indians. The next morning we found what the wolves had left of Peters' corpse. His skull had been crushed by an ax. Soon afterward three Indians called at the cabin and ordered us to move on, under penalty of death. One of them was Tecumseh, chief of the village on the Tippecanoe. We departed hurriedly, and our last view of the spot disclosed the cabin in flames.

It was at this time that Joel decided to stop running from Dancer—to become the hunter instead of the hunted. We pushed on till we reached the small Swiss settlement at Vevay. Here, in a brawl with some insolent river-men, we unwittingly gave aid to two Government agents in search of Bully McGin and his accomplice, Joel Snow. To elude them we left speedily for St. Louis. We stopped to warn McGin at his cabin, but he had already fled. We then took passage on a Virginia ark traveling down the Ohio. On one of the numerous broadhorn boats on the river I spied the two agents. I became very alarmed and continued the journey under extreme nervous tension.

THEN came a second period of acute nervous tension. Mr. Grissom pulled up at the bank of Doe Run and told me to land and buy some eggs and milk and two turkeys. I was anxious to make my purchases quickly and be back aboard before any broadhorns overtook us, but he detained me for some length while he warned me against overcharges. At last he let me go with the parting admonition:

"Remember, don't give more'n twenty-five cents for each turkey. And the eggs shouldn't be more'n six cents a dozen. But go seven if you have to. The same price per quart for the milk."

I wasted no time in dickering. At the house nearest the bank I had the jug filled with milk, bought the eggs and turkeys, and forgot to ask the price. The woman promptly charged me more than she would have had I shown a tendency to dicker; and I was glad to pay the difference out of my own pocket and get back to my friends just as one of the suspected broadhorns came around a bend.

As we remained at the mooring, Greenberry and I retired to the cabin until I saw it was the boat with the woman washing and the two children watching the current. The clothes now were being taken down from a line strung between two posts, and if there were any men aboard I did not see them. As it was early evening, we dropped down a half a mile on the same side and moored at a good landing. This was disappointing, as I had expected we would travel through the night. But Grissom desired to rearrange some of the cargo.

Before sunrise we were off again, with several ghostly boats showing through the mists ahead. I had the feeling that once we entered the Mississippi we would be safe from discovery. Greenberry insisted there was no likelihood that Coby and Allen would descend the river. But fear was ever at my elbow and distracted my attention from much of the river's wonders.

We passed Blue River, with the hills leaving the background to crowd in quite close to the river and its little settlement.

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For several hours we saw no more houses, and the monotony of the rugged, wooded shores remained unbroken until we sighted the hull of a big Marietta boat stranded on the upper end of mile long Flint Island. Grissom said she lodged while trying to make a passage in the preceding winter. Three miles below the island the wind blew so violently against us, and stirred up the river so roughly and caused the ark to act so crotchety, that Grissom pulled up to the right bank.

On the next day after floating eighteen miles, we stopped off the Indiana shore while Grissom, Greenberry Spiller and I landed in the skiff to buy eggs, milk, and fowls at the one house in sight. The owner was a Squire Tobin, a Redstone man. He had a fine plantation started and supplied our needs very cheaply. When we were returning to the skiff we were held up for more than an hour by the arrival of a forty-ton keel making her way up the river by a most ingenious method. We and Squire Tobin and his men were amazed to see the big boat put in to the landing without any sign of a propelling force. Nothing would do but we must board the boat and satisfy our curiosity. As I was counting the minutes until we could lose ourselves in the broad Mississippi, this delay was very distasteful.

The owner's name was Brookfield and he was proud to explain the mystery. A large horizontal wheel was the key to the propelling power. It was kept revolving by six horses walking in a circle on a gallery built over the boat. As the big wheel turned it worked two cogs on an axle which projected over both sides. Each end of the axle was equipped with eight paddles.

"My own notion. I can make five to six miles an hour, or, say, twenty miles a day," explained Brookfield. And he added that the boat was built the preceding season at Shipping Port and that he was now returning from his first trip in her to New Orleans. He had sold his cargo and had loaded with sugar for the up-trip and had sold almost all of it along the way. Despite the delays in disposing of the sugar, he expected to get home in time to commence a second voyage inside of a month.

"You've got a wonderful idea that works fine, Mr. Brookfield," praised Grissom. "You've done better than that man who says he'll make boats go on these waters by steam."

Brookfield laughed and replied:

"Steam can't be depended on. Hosses can."

"That's right! You can always know what to expect from a good hoss. But yours need to be turned out. Two of them look rather pindling."

"I get back the cost of the hosses by selling sugar on the up-trip and by the time I save," boasted Brookfield. "I've lost seven hosses on this trip so far. Only two left of the first set."

Grissom's face revealed incredulity, then anger. Before he could speak a loud voice from the river hailed us, crying:

"Hi! The boat! Hold that boat there!"

Before I could shift my gaze to the river Greenberry was tugging my arm and swallowing convulsively. Coby and Allen, on the roof of a broadhorn, were staring at me and the old man while the men at the oars were struggling vigorously to work the sluggish craft into the bank.

"Any one can see it who wants to look at it," bawled Brookfield. "We'll be here some hours."

The broadhorn responded so slowly to the oars that it was some distance from the shore when it rounded a bend below. Joel at the sweep was smoking his pipe and placidly waiting for us to return. I wanted to say something, to do something, to warn him, but couldn't.

Grissom bruskly announced:

"Well, Mr. Brookfield, I've seen enough. When you tell me you've killed seven poor, dumb animals working this thingumbob I've seen and heard enough." And straightway he jumped ashore and made for the skiff. Greenberry and I, carrying the purchases, lagged none.

The broadhorn had disappeared below the wooded bend. And, whereas I had feared the worst, I now had a glimmer of hope. Grissom was muttering under his breath, profanely condemning all contrivances that must be fed on horseflesh. His mood was propitious for our one slim chance of meeting the law-officers. We reached the ark and Greenberry and I carried the supplies into the cabin and remained there. The four men began asking eager questions. Grissom was too angry to explain details and too anxious to get out of sight of the poor animals. He sharply ordered an immediate departure and proceeded to relieve his mind with more profanity.

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It seemed as if we never would get under way, whereas we were going with the current inside of fifteen seconds after Grissom gave his order. From the small window in the cabin Greenberry and I beheld Coby and Allen turning the bend and working a skiff inshore and using all their strength to make the Tobin landing quickly. I heard Joel give them a friendly hail, never dreaming he was saluting his trailers. Nor did they suspect the genial steersman was the companion of Bully McGin, the man they were seeking to find.

We rounded the bend and saw the broadhorn wallowing in midstream again, and we knew Coby and Allen must catch another flat before they could pick up the pursuit. My fears dropped from me, but we did not tell Joel of the narrowness of his escape. This day we covered fifty miles, traveling all night, and found the shores low and uninteresting and the hills withdrawn from sight. Islands, new plantation's, the string of small settlements called "Scuffletown," and the mouth of Green River in turn came to meet us. Nine miles below the Green River Grissom called our attention to a point of rocks and told us we would not see another stone for seventy miles, or until we reached Shawneetown. And he added the information that as the result of this absence of rocks the land had been bid up to ten dollars an acre, or eight dollars more than the usual price. Greenberry at once declared it to be the Land of Promise he had so often dreamed of. He seemed perfectly contented to float by it, however. We moored for the night at Henderson, composed of twenty houses, two stores and two large tobacco warehouses.

We all paid a visit to Squire McBride to see a newfangled machine that gins, cards and spins cotton all at once. He had a young child turn the wheel and we saw eight threads spun at once and wound on as many spools. The next day found us entering the right hand channel of Diamond Island. One of the steersmen, Amos Brocher, told us it contained eight hundred acres of excellent land. That it was well-timbered and beautiful to gaze upon our own eyes quickly learned. It was owned by a Scotchman from South Carolina named Alvis. He had cleared a hundred and fifty acres on the Kentucky side and established slave quarters there. What interested me more were the stories Brocher told of the days when Mason and other notorious river pirates made the island their rendezvous and preyed upon the flatboats. These narratives caused me to realize how vastly more dangerous river travel had been only a few years earlier.

Another landmark on the journey was Shawneetown, a new settlement on the sight of the ancient home of the Shawnees after they were driven off the Cumberland by the Chickasaws. We made a landing and went ashore. There were two dozen cabins. Within twelve miles were extensive salt works. I visited the two long burial mounds, the only reminder left by the Indians and saw several human bones scattered around, and found some small copper bells which were as thin and light as paper.

The next place I remember vividly is Cave-in-Rock, twenty miles below Shawneetown. Border stories have placed many tragedies at and around this cave, as it was the headquarters of various terrible criminals. Samuel Mason, Dancer's master, had lived there before leaving the Ohio to rob and kill on the Natchez Trace. Grissom tied up so we might all visit the place. It had been the home of as rapacious and relentless assassins as ever infested any country. When we were up to the large, tunnel-like opening, we could understand how difficult it would have been to surprize the ferocious tenants; as it commanded a long view up and down the river. We paced off a hundred and sixty feet as the depth of the cave and forty feet for the average width. The floor inclined upward, the slope being formed by dirt washing down through a sinkhole at the rear. Near the middle of the ceiling was an opening large enough to admit a man. A notched log served as a ladder in reaching this, and I climbed it and found myself in a small chamber, some four feet square and a dozen high.

"Jeffy, come down here!" called out Joel.

I found him standing by the wall and near the foot of my ladder. Greenberry and Grissom were on top of the bluff, examining the sinkhole. Without a word Joel pointed to the wall. Marked there with the point of some sharp instrument was—

Dancer 16

"You think he's been here recently?"

"I know it," quietly said Joel, but with his eyes gleaming. "And I believe he's

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ahead of us and that we shall find him."

"This may be an old date. If it is a date."

"We left the river for the North Country a few days before the sixteenth of the month. He's the one that's being chased now."

On the wall were other names. Some of honest wayfarers, some of murderers. Among the latter was the boldly carved words.

Mason of the Woods

This was Mason's favorite form of announcing his presence at some scene of robbery, or murder. It had been found written on paper and pinned on trees down the Natchez Trace. In the cave it suggested a return from exploits on the Trace. But the name which held our attention and interest was that of the high-shouldered scoundrel.

WE WENT aboard the ark and, with Zadok Cramer's "The Navigator" to guide us, we made our way through the dangerous channel, beginning two miles below the cave and at the head of Walker's Bar, and extending to Tower Rock and the foot of Hurricane Island, eight miles of dangerous water. But nowhere in "The Navigator" could I find any reference to the criminal history of the cave, nor any warning to those who must pass it.

When we passed the blue mouths of the Cumberland and the Tennessee, and I saw boats going up each river, bound for Nashville and Knoxville, I thought of my youth and wondered when we would be free to return and make our home in Knoxville. We passed Fort Massac without stopping. The small brass two-pounders shone like gold in the midday sun. To the encouragement of drums and fifes some fifty soldiers were marching around the sixty-acres of parade-ground, while apart from them some recruits were awkwardly going through maneuvers. We passed Cache River, once the headquarters of murderous river scum, and after another hour we entered the lordly Mississippi.

And now came a curious experience. The current of the Ohio rushed us almost to the middle of the Mississippi, and despite "The Navigator" I was almost convinced that at this point the big river flowed to the west. Before we reached mid-channel our presumption was resented and the stronger current hurled us back where we belonged. I had marveled at the blue of the Ohio's tributaries and considered the latter to be a very muddy stream. I found it almost clear compared with the Mississippi, as for several miles I could distinctly trace the waters of the two streams.

It commenced to rain steadily and continued with scarcely any cessation for three days. The river was from a half to three-quarters of a mile wide and we were surrounded by blurred wastes. Even when the river broadened to a mile we found we did not have too much room because of the islands and sand-bars. During the first day we covered fifty miles and laid up for the night in Bayou St. Jean at the upper end of New Madrid. We left in the downpour and for two days and two nights recklessly fell down with the current. It was most hazardous traveling, and few boats ventured forth in the night. But Grissom suddenly seemed to be impatient to complete his journey. His boatmen were also eager to press on, and it was not for us, working our passage, to make objections.

It was nerve-tingling enough in the daytime, with the vision sharply limited by the heavy rain. Bars and islands rushed upstream through the gray mists almost before we could discern them. At night it was like standing on a powder-mine. I refused to sleep until the third night, when Nature took me in hand. The sun was shining when I awoke. Grissom gravely informed me he had "run away from the storm."

We saw our first Indians between Island Thirty-one and Flour Island when four Shawnees paddled swiftly toward us in a light canoe. Their approach was so rapid as to be menacing, and I was not surprized when Grissom picked up his rifle. They came on more slowly and their attitude changed, and they held up a wild turkey and made signs they wished to trade it for some whisky. Grissom shook his head and offered flour, and warned us to stand by so that not more than one man might board us. They sullenly took the flour and made for the left shore. That night we moored at a recent Indian camp, as several trees had been barked within twenty-four hours, and the bark huts were still standing. We were glad when a South California boat and one from Pittsburgh moored alongside of us.

The three boats started together in the

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morning, but were widely separated by the time we were abreast of the First Chickasaw Bluff. I have always remembered the pale orange color of this clay cliff and the yellowish-brown of the second bluff, but my recollections of the rest of the journey is a patchwork of rushing waters, tangles of trees filched from caved-in banks, ugly sawyers

rising and disappearing in the muddy tide, of the three miles of snags in the Devil's Race-ground, of tall cypresses leaning far out from a low bank and threatening to fall on boats inexorably forced under them by the current of the devious channel of the Devil's Elbow, where half the passage is filled with snags. I have been on the big river many times since then but the impressions left from that first voyage have not been changed by intimacy. As the pictures whirl through my mind they are more like what one recalls of a dream.

We were well out when we passed the Fourth Chickasaw Bluff and the mouth of the Wolf. I glanced at Joel and found him staring at Fort Pickering; and I knew he was recalling that day when the friendly Chickasaw warned him of Dancer. He quickly read my mind and told me:

"It's different now, Jeffy. We're the hunters now. Never scared of anything that walks on legs if we can see it, or have it in front of us."

"I know where Dancer kept under cover," I found myself saying.

He stared wide-eyed.

"In some Indian village," I continued. "That's why the Chickasaw knew about him."

"There's a thought in that," he muttered.

He did not refer to our quarry again until we were passing what was left of beautiful Stack Island, also known as Crow's Nest, and Number Ninety-four. The river was steadily swallowing this island. Joel remarked—

"That's where that beast ought to be lying dead this second."

In time we passed the mouth of the Yazoo, and when we were hurrying by Walnut Hills the boatmen began singing lustily and even Grissom smiled broadly although there was nothing unusual to feel happy about that I could see. Even Greenberry sensed something very pleasing, for he was chuckling and smoothing his beard as he came to stand by me while I watched the shifting scene. I inquired the cause of the general good humor. He explained:

"Next is Natchez. And us boatmen must celebrate the down-trip with a day or two off under the hill, with a few snorts of good liquor to oil the throat and encourage song."

MY FIRST view of the Natchez landing was disappointing and depressing. A string of ragged buildings extended parallel with the river at the foot of a high, steep, sandy hill. Twenty boats or more were moored along the river front. The buildings were frowzy in appearance—shops or boarding-houses, often the two combined, for boatmen. Liquor was sold in almost every one, and while some Eastern travelers may have been wrong in declaring the place to be the most dissipated in the world, there was no doubting the wealth of trouble awaiting the man who was looking for it.

From Joel I had learned that fevers and agues raged along the low river banks from the beginning of July to the last of October and that the sickness was often mortal; that few strangers escaped a seasoning and that the landing had taken a terrible toll from Ohio boatmen. Thus primed with reliable information, I had not been misled by Greenberry's eulogy on the place. In describing it he had often used the words "balm" and "spice," and would have given

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the impression the death-trap was lavishly endowed with all the beauties and salubrities one might expect to find in a tropic isle. But he was correct in his insistence that many came to the landing never to leave it.

River-men knew its dangers, its sicknesses and lawlessness; but after conquering the perils of the long journey, and feeling themselves safe from river hazards once they tied up under the hill, they were bound to carouse for a few days before proceeding down to New Orleans.

All the bars were doing a big business and men were passing from building to building in various stages of intoxication, good nature, and belligerency. After the quiet of the river, the shouting and singing was a most riotous tumult. Joel would have led me up the hill to Natchez proper had not Grissom insisted we drink each other's good health before parting. That Grissom's three men should head for the nearest drinking-place did not surprize me, although the ark was heavily freighted with liquor and one could have all he craved. But I was amazed that Grissom, grave and deliberate, keen for trade profits, should show a like enthusiasm.

"It's not good for man to drink alone," urged Greenberry, when Joel suggested we could enjoy a farewell dram on the ark.

"Why leave a boatload of whisky to buy drinks in one of those places?" I protested as Joel walked along with Grissom, and Greenberry, very spry for his years, hurried on ahead.

"It ain't the drink, Jeffy, so much as the hankering for company. We've been shut up together on the boat for days and we know everything t'other man thinks."

"It gets into my blood to meet strangers from strange places," added Grissom. "It's human natur' to feel that way."

"And to fight!" I exclaimed. "They're fighting now."

Oaths and fierce shouts rose above the clamor of a drunken chorus calling on all bold flatboat-men to "list to my words, a story to you I'll tell."

"They're always fighting, more or less," said Joel. "I've seen them fighting with knives, pistols and their bare hands many a time— Stand clear, Jeffy. This is a big row!"

We halted as a group of men came through a wide doorway, the foremost tripping and falling, the others piling over them, and the whole mass rolling toward the river like an animated wheel. It was not until the combatants disentangled themselves that we could get an idea of their respective strength. They lined up, with six on a side, and the man with blood flowing from a cut in his forehead was my old enemy Shank. Before they could exchange a blow an Amazon of mixed blood hurled a bottle from the doorway that hit the head of a man on Shank's right, and he went down as if shot through the heart.

A hoarse cheer greeted this elimination, and the six fell upon the five most heartily. They were fighting with their bare hands, and my first thought was that Shank was about to receive a well-deserved beating; and despite Joel's pull at my arm, I remained to enjoy the sight. But as the five battled heroically I was compelled to credit them with a will-to-do. Not only did they refuse to give ground, but they began to force their foes back toward the drinking-place.

The big woman dared not throw another bottle for fear of hitting the wrong target. She shouted loudly and several men came running up to aid the losers. The latter, too, were yelling:

"Pennsylvania boys this way! Pennsylvania boys this way!" And the Allegheny and Monongahela men heard the call and began to respond.

Shank glimpsed us and recognized me. Wiping the blood from his eyes he croaked:

"Kentucky men! Kentucky!"

I discovered I was immensely angry at the unevenness of the odds. I had no liking for Shank, but he typed that animal courage that fights grimly and sturdily even while knowing the battle is lost. He was well-near exhausted by his exertions; and, as fresh foes took the place of the wearied, he darted another glance at us and hoarsely repeated, "Kentucky men, Kentucky men!"

"Let's even it up!" I cried, my blood boiling with a strange, wild enthusiasm I had never experienced before. And I dropped my rifle.

"Stay out!" roared Joel, gripping my shoulder.

One of Shank's companions despairingly cried:

"Tennessee men! Tennessee men!"

"By ——! Give 'em their needings!" yelled Joel. And he released me and discarded his coat beside his rifle and was

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diving into the milling mob because a son of Tennessee had called out in distress.

I was after him and our attack on the enemy's flank laid several men low and allowed us to gain the side of the Kentucky men. But by this time an increasing number of Pennsylvania men, and several Spaniards sent in by the Amazon, joined the enemy.

Shank's eyes lighted with pleasure. From the corner of his mouth he snapped:

"Don't clinch! Smash 'em!"

I believed he was recalling our fight, and forthwith I did battle according to my lights and in the way I had found to be most effective. Our whirling attack checked the enemy for a moment, and then they were ferociously redoubling their efforts and we realized it could end only one way.

Grissom joined the milling mob and commenced shouting:

"Virginia men! Virginia men! Brocher! Benson!"

This battle-cry brought his three men and Greenberry Spiller from a building. Now a note of alarm sounded in Shank's voice as he huskily yelled—

"Look out for Spanish knives!"

I landed a blow on a thickly bewhiskered face and the man would have gone down if not for the pressure behind him. An arm darted over his shoulder and a knife-point flicked within an inch of my eyes.

"—— their hides!" screamed Joel; and he redoubled his efforts and did much damage.

WE WERE almost surrounded when Grissom's three employees and Greenberry made a rear attack. Then over the bobbing heads of the foe I saw Greenberry's lean arm shoot upward, and he was clutching a stool he had brought from the bar. Unlike the Virginia men, he did not attempt to penetrate the mass and gain our side. He kept on the outside of the maddened fighters and brought the stool down on a Spaniard's head. The stool rose and fell, rose and fell, and the foe did not sense the quick diminution of their numbers. Where gouging, murderous men had stood, striving to cripple and maim equally murderous men, there was a huddle of silent forms, and Greenberry had one leg of the stool left. The survivors of his rapid and terrible blows turned and scattered in flight, with Grissom and his Virginians in hot pursuit. Greenberry began a challenge to all hostile boatmen to fetch him a fight, when the Amazon appeared in the doorway with a long, flintlock pistol clutched in both hands. As she was raising this Greenberry spied her and hurled the fragment of the stool, registering a hit on her tough skull. Her attempt to dodge the missile, rather than the blow, caused her to fall and drop the pistol. A man grabbed up the weapon and hurled it into the river.

A loud shout of amusement was raised by the onlookers as the woman bolted through the doorway. Men who had been tense with the fighting lust fell to laughing immoderately. Those stricken by the stool began groaning and stirring. Shank attempted to kick one in the head but Joel flung him back. He grinned good-naturedly, panted heavily, and managed to say:

"Obleeged for you folks dipping in. But when you get 'em down you oughter see that they don't git up."

"Fight's over! Let's liquor and forget it! All boatmen ashore to rum up!" shouted Joel. And as he waved his hand in reenforcement of his invitation and made for a long, lop-sided building, he was followed by those with whom we had been fighting. I watched our late foes suspiciously until I perceived Shank was accepting them as boon drinking companions. One man grinned amiably at me and said—

"I can toss you into the middle of the river, young 'un; but you do have a sweet way of most dingly smashing a man."

Grissom and his men joined us, and shortly thereafter those he had pursued came in and drank at Joel's expense.

Greenberry was praised by those he had stunned, and old fires rekindled in his faded eyes as he greedily swallowed his liquor. He cried:

"Never a sweeter row! Friends, this is the Promised Land I've been dreaming of. Ain't ever going away from this landing."

We had to get him away at once, or have him helpless on our hands. Joel hooked his arm through Greenberry's and dragged him protesting through the doorway. Once outside, he nodded at the structure and told me:

"It was behind this place they found the Kentucky man Dancer murdered and robbed. 'Twas right here the trouble between me and Dancer begun."

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Grissom and his men came out to say they would be there for another day and to urge us to be his guests at one of the boarding-houses. Joel explained we had business in the town, but would try to see him before he left. Then he added:

"You can do me a mighty good turn, Grissom, by asking the men down here if they've seen or heard anything lately of a man called Dancer. I'm keen to find him."

"But there's only one man of that name that I know of. A bad customer for an honest man to have any truck with."

"I come down here to find him most particular. He's tall and thin, and has a yallerish face, and he carries his right shoulder very high, almost up under his ear."

"But, Joel, you don't want to find that man. He's bad!" expostulated Grissom.

"I must find him. Come down here a-purpose. I want to kill him."

Grissom gaped nearly half a minute at this quiet avowal; then muttered—

"I'm glad I ain't Dancer."

"If you can't learn anything about him here, I want you to ask down in New Orleans and leave word when you come back."

"I'll ask everywhere; so will the boys. If he's in the South Country and not hid too closely we may get track of him. But I hope for your sake you never see him."

"That's a poor wish," growled Joel. "He's mortal hard to see; that's the —— of it. If I can see him it'll all be very simple."

We shook hands and took Greenberry up the rough road to the top of the bluff which hides the landing from the upper town and shuts off much of the poisonous swamp vapors from the latter. When we gained the top, and paused to rest from our exertions of half-carrying Greenberry, Joel looked back and said:

"One of the wickedest spots on the river—on any river, Jeffy. A wonderful good place to keep away from."

But now I had eyes only for the town proper. It was scattered loosely over the broken, hilly ground, but despite the surface irregularities, the streets stubbornly intersected at right-angles. With the exception of Market and Front Streets the thoroughfares were bound to be almost impassable in rainy weather until the hollows were filled. We entered the Common in front of the town and halted in front of the market-house while Greenberry got some of the whisky fumes out of his head. The commercial atmosphere was entirely different from that in any of the towns I had been in.

There were many small stalls in which meat, fish, and vegetables were exhibited for sale. These were presided over by Americans, Englishmen, French and Spanish creoles, mixed bloods and coal-black negroes. I had never seen so many nationalities represented in one town before. From what I overheard I discovered meat and fish were as reasonable in price as along the Ohio, but that vegetables, milk, and butter were extravagantly high.

After Greenberry began to breathe normally again we passed through the vari-colored and gaily dressed throngs. There were hunters in fringed leggings and hunting-shirts, planters in immaculate linen, townsmen most fastidiously attired. There were women of all complexions, and cross-breeds besides splendid types of straight strains. Many of these were dressed more exquisitely, if anything, than the belles of Louisville. There were voices from every portion of the country, from many foreign lands. But I was surprized to learn from Joel that many men from Connecticut and New Jersey were among the early settlers on the hill.

The place had a peculiar fascination for an up-country man. There was color, there was vivacity, there was abandon, there was an exotic atmosphere one might expect in a West Indian town. Practically all the dwellings, as well as most of the stores, had balconies and piazzas, a wealth of exterior ornamentation seldom found in many of our rather drab, practical, up-country houses.

A stage-coach arrived from Washington City, the capital of the Territory and situated a few miles up the Trace. Several women, richly dressed, were among the passengers. It was a new world to me, used to flowing roads and settlements close to the water. Joel aroused me from my dreaming and said we should proceed to Mickie's Tavern, if it was still standing. We found it, changed but little, Joel said. We were half way through our meal before the place began to fill up. Joel leaned across the table and whispered:

"Across the room, in line with us, the table against the wall. It's the very table where Dancer and I ate and drank together before I found him out."

Now he was thinking back to that time and that casual meeting with the monster.

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He ate mechanically, his eyes fixed on the pictures inside his head. Greenberry was slumped over his plate and had no talk. I gave my attention to the company. From the talk among the diners I gathered that cotton was the staple product of the surrounding country and that the profits were large. One planter lamented the good old days of 1802 when each hundred pounds of cotton, cleaned of seeds and packed in bags, brought twenty dollars.

"I wish Monsieur Du Pratz were alive to tell us how he made olives succeed. Ours are a failure," babbled a pretty woman.

"The blight has struck our grapes although the clusters were perfectly formed," remarked another.

"It's the dampness that does the mischief," broke in a man's voice.

"Our pears and peaches and quince do wonderfully well. The apple-trees sent down from Kentucky do almost as well."

"My husband has lost patience trying to do anything with cherries."

"I must have fifty more hands another year," broke in the deep voice of a planter.

Joel came out of his dreaming and signaled for us to follow him. Under his guidance we secured comfortable lodgings with a French creole family and left our belongings and went to walk about the town.

EVERY garden I saw contained fig-trees, and Greenberry came to life and quoted from the Bible to prove this was the Promised Land, where every house-holder could sit under his own fig-tree. Except where the summer sun had baked the ground the grass was a vivid green. The hills were covered with wild peppergrass, which makes a good salad. We exchanged greetings with a plantation foreman returning home with two new slaves, and from him we learned that improved land near the town was valued as high as ten dollars an acre, while the unimproved could be bought for fifty cents an acre. Greenberry loudly insisted he would buy a large section and start raising cotton.

After the foreman had ridden on, with his charges walking ahead, Greenberry fell into his old strain of talking and showed the Natchez country with all the beautiful speeches he had made about northern Ohio. The substance of his talk was that any man could end his life in comfort if he had enough slaves. And he cast an appreciative glance at a beautiful quadroon girl walking with graceful carriage after a heavy-footed white woman, her mistress. The slave trade flourished here to an extent I had never dreamed of. Slaves were bought in the North as their service was needed. In Natchez they were bought in droves and resold to outlying plantations and down the river for the sake of making a profit. We saw several groups just arrived from Kentucky and other points, and after watching them I decided they were homesick for their northern bondage much as I might long for the little house at McBee's Ferry.

I was surprized at the quantity of gold and silver displayed in the market. These metals seemed to be as common as any other commodity. I also was impressed by the great number of turkey buzzards in the town. They were continually flying about, lighting on roofs and in the yards and were as tame as pigeons. Toward evening the air was filled with them and they retired to the highest bluff on the river.

There was a considerable number of Choctaw Indians in the street, the men coming in each fall and winter so their women might work in the cotton fields. These people were paid with blankets, or a blue cloth they used for clothing, or gay colored handkerchiefs, or worsted bindings of various bright colors. Our Ohio towns were very drab compared with Natchez on the hill. There was color everywhere. When standing on the bluffs away from houses and people we looked down on the green, brown, yellow and red of the laurel, the holly, the oak, the walnut, and the poplar carpeting the river bottoms.

Out in the river gliding under the blood-red disc of the low sun a large keel boat of twenty oars was making upstream. We could hear the men shouting and singing under the stimulus of their three stiff drams of whisky a day. Down the river came huge rafts of timber for Natchez and New Orleans, and boats of every river type. Very few of the boats held on by the town, and the clamor of those drinking at the landing below was almost continuous. And among those eagerly making the landing a certain number would remain behind, killed by disease or violence.

Yet it was good to be there, and my mind was filled with new pictures. At Natchez

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the French had built Fort Rosalie nearly a hundred years back. In 1729 the garrison and few inhabitants were massacred by the Natchez Indians, who in turn were all but exterminated by the French. The place had been the seat of government of the French, the Spanish, the English, and our new Republic. And each regime had left a lasting impress on the people and their habits.

It was a crazy patchwork sort of a place, yet with surprizingly few discords. The town suggested great age and the influence of the tropics. One from the North got the impression it was fearfully remote from anything else. The streets resounded with the speech of various nationalities and were filled with every shade of color—of those in bondage, of the drunken and highly painted aborigines, of beautiful women faultlessly dressed and faintly picking their way around mudholes, and of male exquisites. There was the blurred patter of foreign tongues, of twanging voices from our cold North, of the mellow, liquid speech of the slave. There was a profusion of rare wines and excellent liquors, but a great scarcity of pure water. There was unbounded hospitality for the honest stranger, but few walked the streets at night. Such were some of my first impressions of Natchez on the hill.

For a week we pursued our quest surreptitiously. We whispered to trustworthy men and had them secretly make inquiries. And learned nothing. Then we procured horses and wasted much time in riding down to that thoroughly French town of Baton Rouge, following a false scent. We spent a day there among the half a dozen frame houses and some sixty untidy cabins that are crowded in one street along the river bank and held there by the low, steep hill behind them.

Almost every house had for sale a small stock of tobacco, or vegetables, or cheap rum made from sugar cane, or bread. We had been advised to inquire of a Mr. Eagan, who owned one of the two well stocked stores. The man we were trailing resembled Dancer in a slight degree but was well known to Eagan, who vouched for him as distinctly not being our man. Eagan urged us to accept his hospitality and wait for the suspect to return, which he would do in a few days. Being satisfied we had followed the wrong man, we refused the invitation and started back at once. On reaching Natchez we rode out to Washington where Greenberry and I waited at Hill's tavern while Joel interviewed Governor Claiborne. He had no news, but he was keenly interested to have Dancer truly dead, and he gave Joel some good advice.

In substance he had said:

"You've tried by stealth to find the man. Now openly announce you seek him. He has many enemies down here, men who fear him and who will be glad to hear he has been caught and hung. Tell everyone you are hunting. If he hears of it, it will do no harm. He knows he's wanted. It may cause him to break from his hiding-place. He's a coward."

From then on we publicly sought information. Joel even offered two hundred dollars for news that would permit him to find the wretch. An old reward of five hundred dollars was renewed by Claiborne. Word was carried down the river to New Orleans and all towns and plantations between, where all honest folks were eager to help exterminate the vicious breed. There was hearty cooperation but nothing came of it. One day I told Joel:

"If he's as far south as this he's over the river in the Louisiana canebrakes. And we'd stand no chance of finding him there. But I believe he's somewhere up the Trace, or hiding in some Indian village."

Joel already had talked with Choctaw and Chickasaw men and was satisfied none knew the whereabouts of Dancer, although two admitted he had spent some time in their villages and those of the Creek people before his last appearance. Joel announced we would ride north.

We set forth the next day and found much of the road heavy from the fall rains. We met few travelers, except Indians, and of all we asked concerning Dancer. The first incident to break the monotony of the journey was the sullen behavior of the Indian ferrymen at Colbert's ferry on the Tennessee. They refused to set us across until we had paid them extra. This in itself was not significant, but already there was talk of the Shawnee man, Tecumseh, beginning to exert a strong influence over some of the southern tribes. His brother, the Prophet, had been forecasting an upheaval of conditions, and Joel insisted the attitude of some of the Indians was changed.

At the old Chickasaw agency, half way

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between Natchez and Nashville, we exchanged our horses, as here Joel found several old friends. None of them had heard of Dancer since he fared north. We took the last half of the journey, some two hundred and seventy-five miles, leisurely. Whenever we came to a cabin we put the usual questions.

Throughout all this tedious business Joel had been afire to find his man. His enthusiasm continued high long after I was convinced our quest was hopeless. When we reached Gordon's Ferry on Duck River, in Hickman county, we talked with John Willy, who had helped to build the Government road. We asked the old questions as a matter of form. Willy startled us by replying:

"May be the death of me. Surely will if it's known I told. But less'n a week ago I heard Dancer was hanging out somewhere near Nashville. The man who told me is trustworthy, but I won't give his name. You've about finished a mighty big circle in looking for that cuss. It would be funny if all this time he's been hiding near Nashville."

"If he's there we'll have him!" cried Joel.

"Good luck in your hunting. But look sharp. Chances are some of his kind have carried word to him you've been looking for him down at Natchez."

WE RODE away, filled with hope that the long trail would end successfully. That night, while making camp, I noticed several times Joel was standing with his head tilted to one side as if listening. At first I supposed he had caught the sound of an approaching traveler, but none came along. As I was about to turn in I missed him, and found him standing at the side of the road and staring toward the southwest.

"It's time for the blankets. What are you waiting here for?" I asked.

"Dancer," he whispered. "I have the old feeling. He's behind us. He's heard we're looking for him. He's come down the Trace and circled round to get behind us."

I went limp and faint at this return of his old weakness. I was horrified. I tried to reason with him; to convince him his morbid suspicion had been excited by John Willy's words. He went with me to the blankets and I tried to make myself believe he would work out of his mood before morning. But daylight found him casting furtive glances behind him.

The remainder of that ride to Nashville was a nightmare to me; and sometimes, in my dreams, I go through with it again. Every little while Joel would look behind him. So acute became his conviction that the man was closing in on us he requested me to climb a tree and search our back track.

One afternoon we remained in ambush for two hours, awaiting the Nemesis who did not come. It was horribly grotesque. Three men, who for weeks had searched ardently for a cowardly assassin, now suddenly transformed into three men being hounded by a morbid notion. So powerful was the influence of Joel's example that Greenberry gradually entertained the same sickly fear. He would give a nervous start every time he heard a horse galloping around some bend behind us. And at last the thing got me.

I knew it was not as my friends feared, yet I had the feeling that something very evil was behind me.

When we sighted the smoke of Nashville my companions betrayed eagerness to get clear of the road and into the shelter of the houses. I knew, however, that an imagination capable of supplying us with an invisible pursuer could as cunningly keep him close to us when we were within stout walls. I could foresee that Dancer would be ever lurking just outside the barred door, or prowling around the windows, or trying to gain entrance while we slept. I believed that one night of such foolish suffering would send Joel riding north into Kentucky in a vain quest for peace of mind.

A mile from town I reined in and determinedly announced:

"See here, Joel: we can't spend our lives running away from a shadow like this."

"Jeffy, we ain't scared of anything that walks on legs if we can see it," he reminded.

"There are two ways out of all this nonsense," I continued. "We'll go east and try living in some big city. Dancer will never follow us there. Or we'll go to St. Louis and hire out with some trader going up the Missouri. Dancer will never venture up that lonely river. I'll run no more from a shadow."

Greenberry said:

"When the back of my neck feels cold

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and bristly it ain't no shadow, young man. It's death."

"Ay, death," murmured Joel absent-mindedly. "It's more'n a notion, Jeffy. There's something inside my head that warns me of danger. I'd be a fool not to duck and dodge until I can see what it is. I never hankered for those eastern cities. They ain't neighborly. It may be good to go up the Missouri."

We turned a bend in the road and discovered a large group of men in front of a log cabin on the edge of the town. Other men were running into town. There was much loud talking. As we drew closer we saw a man wildly waving his arms. He was shouting:

"Time to end this bloody business! First at Knoxville; now here! By ——! If we ain't got guts enough to find and finish off that critter we deserve to be killed in cold blood!"

Joel spurred his horse into the group and sternly called out:

"Jason Abbot, what's the matter here? What's wrong at Knoxville?"

"Murder's been done here, Joel Snow! Another ax-murder! Poor Michael Finnerty, who lived here, raising hawgs, was killed sometime last night with an ax. Just like the man in Knoxville was killed. Each was killed for the sake of the few shillings he happened to have in his pocket!"

"Do you suspect any one?" cried Joel.

"We know the man! He was seen running away in the moonlight. He thought to keep covered by the night, but there was light enough to show his —— high shoulder. It's Dancer's work! He done it! It's been talked for two weeks he was hiding round these parts. Lord forgive us for not rooting him out of hiding when we first heard he was near! Now he's chopped poor Finnerty up for the sake of a few shillings!"

Joel clutched my shoulder to steady himself. But it was not fear that made him go weak. When he could control his voice he whispered to me:

"Think of it, Jeffy! He was here all the time, just like John Willy said—and we thought he was behind us."

I stared at the small cabin and the old trick of seeing pictures inside my head held me silent. I was watching a tall, thin form and wearing a flapping cloak, and with head cuddled down on one shoulder, running through the white moonlight, and clutching the pitiful handful of silver that had cost poor Finnerty his life.

CHAPTER VII

THE RETURN OF MCGIN

JOEL was foremost in organizing a band of regulators and in leading the pursuit of Dancer. At last we had something tangible in our search of the cowardly murderer. We went after him in the direction we believed he had taken, as hotly as we would endeavor to track a mad wolf. There was no looking backward now; nor any painful listening for the stealthy approach of an unseen enemy.

It was the common belief that the man had fled to the South Country. Leaving Greenberry Spiller to take his ease in Nashville, we rode far down the Natchez Trace, spreading word of the crime wherever we went. There were twenty of us at the start. Another band rode down the Chickasaw Trace as far as Trace Creek in Lawrence County. We found no news of the man, but we learned something. One of the Colberts, a leading Chickasaw family, talked with us at Griner's tavern down in Hickman County, and said:

"That bad white man hides in the Creek country. You can't dig him out. The Chickasaws won't have him now. But Red Eagle, or Weatherford as you call him, hates your people. He has just opened a big bag of talk sent by Tecumseh, the Shawnee. It's a red talk and lays down a red path. If your bad white man is down in any of Red Eagle's towns he will be safe as long as he stays there."

Greatly disappointed, we straggled back to Nashville where we were filled with fresh chagrin. Dancer had fooled us. He had gone north into Kentucky after murdering Finnerty and had killed a man with an ax near Danville. This crime had paid him only a few shillings. Kentucky men were hunting him and the paths to Tennessee were closely watched. Then came news of a man knifed to death in the Cherokee strip on the road to Knoxville. Robbery had been the motive and from the hideous nature of the wounds it was commonly believed that Dancer was the murderer.

These crimes brought the same horror the Harp killings had produced. Ordinarily a poor man has nothing to fear from robbers,

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but here was a wretch who preyed on the humble and killed on the chance of securing the price of a bottle of whisky. The terror created by these crimes spread rapidly. Men humbly occupied in tilling a small piece of ground sought refuge in the towns, or worked in pairs and kept behind barred doors after dark.

As the days passed and no fresh cause for alarm was reported, it was believed Dancer was out of the country. Whether he stole back to Tennessee and south to find an asylum with the disaffected Creeks, or had taken the river road from some Kentucky town, none could know. Joel and I searched for weeks long after the others had returned to their homes and work.

These killings washed all fear from Joel's mind and he became his old wholesome self and never again appeared to suspect that death was stealing upon him from behind. Accompanied by Greenberry Spiller, who took it for granted his lot was cast with ours for all earthly time, we returned to Tennessee and formed a trade alliance with a son of General Colbert. This partnership with a member of that powerful Chickasaw family gave us a great advantage in the Chickasaw trade. Colbert loaned his name and took his profits while we did the work. We ranged far and wide among the Choctaws, Chickasaws and Cherokees, and more than once were at the Fourth Chickasaw Bluff and saw the soldiers drilling at Fort Pickering. But we did not penetrate the Creek country because of the growing hostility among Weatherford's followers. Much Creek trade was brought to us at neutral points, however, and men of the white party, under William MacIntosh, half-breed chief of the Lower Creeks, urged us to establish posts in some of their towns. But we feared interference from Weatherford. He had listened to Tecumseh, whose religious teachings were now taking a new slant, one that menaced the white settlements from the Great Lakes to the Gulf. On the half a dozen occasions that business took us to Natchez on the hill we always asked for news about Dancer, and learned nothing. Finally Joel believed the villain was dead; and I hoped so.

In the summer of 1811 we decided, although we had made excellent profits, that the future of the Indian trade was east of the Mississippi. We would have traveled to St. Louis to form a partnership with some of the Missouri traders if not for two shadows gradually spreading over the country. These were the possibility of war with either France or England, and the undoubted fact that Tecumseh was plotting red mischief.

Indians and settlers were continually having isolated quarrels north of the Ohio; nor were the red men always in fault. The intolerance toward all Indians displayed by many settlers was most provoking to a people who so recently held all the land west of the Alleghenies. One instance I recall was when horses were stolen and an application was made to Tecumseh for their return. A portion was returned. Another instance was the murder of an Indian at Vincennes by an Italian inn-keeper. Governor Harrison promptly directed the murderer be brought to justice, and a jury equally prompt was to acquit him without even a pretense at deliberation. Some murders were committed by Potawatomi men, and the settlers were incensed that the Indians did not seem to be disposed to right these wrongs. Complaints were daily being made to Governor Harrison, who in turn regretted the injustice done the red men, that they should so often be maltreated and that justice should be accorded them so rarely.

Shortly after the Vincennes man's acquittal two Wea Indians were badly wounded by whites near that settlement. The criminals were not brought to justice, although they made no pretense of denying the assaults. This attitude, far too common, of considering the Indians as a pest to be exterminated as a new settlement is cleared of wolves and wild-cats, was bound to bring reprisals. The Delawares refused to give up White Turkey, who was wanted for robbery. When the demand was made they answered that they would never surrender another man until some of the white miscreants were punished. But they did outdo the whites by executing White Turkey.

In June Governor Harrison warned Tecumseh that he could not surprize and overwhelm the white settlements. He reminded him of the strength of the Seventeen Fires. He told him that his united forces could not overcome the Kentucky Fire alone; and that he, the Governor, was of the Long Knife Fire (Virginia) and that his voice would bring against the Indians as many men wearing hunting-shirts as there were mosquitoes along the Wabash.

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In the following month whites were murdered in Illinois and the Shawnees were blamed. It was commonly believed that these scattered killings were preliminary to an attack on Vincennes. Tecumseh insisted his confederacy was inspired by the union of the Seventeen Fires, that he was merely copying the white man's form of government, and that no war was being planned against the whites. Shortly thereafter he went to enlist the aid of the Southern tribes and secured a following among the Seminoles and the whole-hearted support of Weatherford's Creeks. When MacIntosh, of the Lower Towns, refused the Shawnee war-belts, Tecumseh displayed great anger and declared he would stamp his foot when he was back at Detroit and shake down all their houses. The New Madrid earthquake a few weeks later coincided nicely with this threat, and more than one terrified Indian exclaimed:

"Tecumseh has reached Detroit!"

The President was being implored through memorials to protect the western settlements. A regiment was sent to Indiana to serve under Harrison, but the latter was reminded that every effort was to be made to preserve peace.

Such was the condition of affairs when we returned to Louisville in September. Governor Harrison suffered no delusions of Tecumseh's ability as a leader and an organizer. He wrote the War Department that, if not for the proximity of the United States, the great Shawnee might erect an empire which would match the glory of the red regimes of Mexico and Peru. He stressed the unceasing industry of the man, of his rapidity in traveling from the Lakes to the Gulf. War with the confederated tribes loomed larger in potentials for us of the border than did the probability of war with a foreign power. It was at our door. Settlers were swarming down to the Ohio from the North. Once more it seemed to be fated that death would be the only reward for those who planted corn north of the river.

THEN something happened which for a time wiped all thoughts of war from my mind. Joel and I were standing on the bank, looking across at the north shore when we heard a man floating by on a broadhorn lustily bawl out:

"Bully McGin's back on the river!"

My first emotion was most happy. Then I glanced apprehensively at Joel. He shook his head and told me:

"All through with that Mexican business. I took to it because I wanted to leave Dancer far behind. Burr ain't got forward any and the venture's dead. Looks like now we've got to fight one of them critters, either England or France, so they'll quit bothering our boats. All the fighting men will be needed right here."

We hurried to Bear Grass Creek and found the harbor there alive with the news. I got a boatman aside and diffidently asked:

"Does McGin bring his daughter with him?"

"He has a great lady with him, not bigger'n a water-bucket. A very grand lady. I ain't seen her, but was told by a man who passed them up near the Kanawha."

I hurried to Joel and exclaimed, "Why, they'll be here any time. Polly is a great lady, they say."

"She'll be just Polly to us. No uppity airs with old friends."

But I was recalling her farewell note, in which she said she was to become a great lady. My enthusiasm was chilled, although culture should have improved her impulses to quarrel.

We waited until late evening and then retired to our lodgings. It was late when I fell asleep. Forgotten was Tecumseh's ambitions and the disturbing knowledge that Weatherford's Creeks had learned the war dance of the Lakes, a ferocious gift from the great leader on his last trip down the river. Forgotten were the war clouds on both sides of the Atlantic, with the wrath of the Federalists directed against Napoleon and the French, with the resentment of President Madison and his party turned against the English. Our old friends, the McGins, were back on the river, and we soon should be seeing them. In the morning Joel suddenly discovered he was very impatient to meet our friends, and he would have started up the river to meet them had not Greenberry Spiller sensibly argued he would save time by waiting at the creek. We ate an early breakfast and hurried to the river. The day passed without them, but among the boatmen news of their coming was general and was the chief topic. Many newcomers had made their homes in

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and about Louisville since the McGins went away. These knew nothing of the man. It sounded queer to hear some one at the tavern table ask—

"Who is the McGin fellow they're talking about?"

On the third day of waiting a big ark came to moorings in the creek. McGin's bare head was a torch. The slight figure under his arm would be Polly, but she was wearing a bonnet and under different circumstances I might not have recognized her at that distance. I had expected to find her as she was when she pricked me with her father's long sword; breeches and crimson sash and rabbit-skin hat. A "great lady" had meant hauteur in my thoughts; a matter of manner and spirit rather than apparel.

As the ark came closer we waved our hands and McGin raised his mighty voice in a shout of greeting. Polly waved daintily. A woman standing behind her was more demonstrative, and I knew her to be faithful Margy.

McGin began giving orders to the crew. Joel murmured:

"He's changed, Jeffy. The old McGin will never come back to the river."

"It's his black clothes and much lace that makes him appear different," I replied.

"It's something else," muttered Joel. Then, explosively, "——! I have it! He ain't wearing his long tickler!"

"He's a fine gentleman and Polly is a grand lady."

"Yet I feel he wouldn't like to be reminded of the time he drank most of my whisky when we first met."

They were coming ashore now, Polly under her father's arm. She was holding her skirts clear of the litter of the landing-place. Only a bit of her fiery hair showed and her gown was one to cause envy in the heart of all our Louisville belles. McGin looked the aristocrat in his somber black, set off by the high stock and the heavy lace at the cuffs. His stride was dignified and the face was stern and showed nothing of the old deviltry. Margy remained behind to oversee several slaves bringing the boxes and bags ashore. The father and daughter presented such a genteel appearance that Joel and I remained, gaping at them as they came up the bank.

With a shake of his red head, the hair wore long and tied behind with a black ribbon, McGin roared:

"—— your stuck up manners, Joel! Have you forgotten us?"

"Bully McGin! Good friend!" cried Joel, now advancing with both hands outstretched. "The East hasn't finnified your voice any!"

"I'm Kentucky bred, a plain man of the people," loudly replied McGin as their hands met. And he darted a glance at the onlookers, who nodded in approval of his democracy.

Without a word Joel was next swinging Polly off her feet and saluting her with a resounding smack.

"Lor', Mr. Snow! But I'm glad to see you!" she softly cried. "And who's the meeching-mannered person behind you?"

McGin gave another guffaw and clapped a mighty hand on my shoulder. The blow was the friendliness of Bully McGin. The trick of glancing aside at the loungers was something he had acquired in the East. He was prosperous, as betokened by his slaves and wonderful finger-rings. He quickly released me and I advanced to Polly. She made me a little courtesy and was, I believed, above shaking hands. With a side-glance at the staring boatmen McGin murmured:

"Come, come, Princess. None of the high and mighty down here. We're plain Kentucky people. Give the lad your hand."

With a wonderful smile for her father she gave me both small hands, which were so soft and white I could scarcely believe they ever gripped a long sword. All I could say was—

"You've changed mightily, Polly."

"For the better," she insisted, rather than asked.

"I don't know. You're different," I awkwardly replied.

McGin roared jovially and waved his hand to embrace all of Kentucky and loudly announced:

"Friends, I'm glad to be home! Walk along with her, Jeffry. There must be some old friends among those boatmen. Come along, Joel, and make me known to any who don't know me."

"Margy?" asked Polly, hesitating.

"She will stay to see the goods are taken ashore."

"You've brought a trade cargo?" eagerly asked Joel.

"My household furnishings. I've taken

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a house near Dr. Gault's." He made a little gesture which set Polly to walking by my side. I glanced back and saw him smacking his palm against those of the grinning boatmen and river loungers and I would have believed it was Bully McGin, if not for the suspicion he was striving to impress the river characters that he was very democratic.

As I walked beside Polly, tongue-tied, I was conscious for the first time in my life of the size of my hands and the brick red color of my bony wrists. I took care not to permit my rough clothes to brush against her dainty attire. She pressed closer and warned—

"Folks will think you've some catching-sickness if you keep such a distance."

"Where have you been living?"

"Pittsburgh first. Then Philadelphia. We spent much time in Washington."

"I got your message. They did it."

"Did what, Jeffry?"

"Made you a grand lady."

She laughed with all her old time genuineness and further delighted me by asking:

"Had some more good fights? Remember when you mauled the boatman?" And I told her how I had fought in Shank's behalf at Natchez under the hill.

"I was a vicious little beast to get you into trouble at the shooting-match. Yet I'm glad you fought him."

"You've been to school."

"I've been drilled, instructed, and taught until I am fair weary. Besides my books there was dancing and etiquette and much else."

"But you've been happy?"

"I'm always happy when my father's with me. Sometimes I think I'm not so happy as I was when we were traveling up and down the river. But that couldn't last. I had to grow up. Father's grown up. Please don't speak of him as 'Bully.' He's Mr. Barney McGin. He's taken a fine house and brought a boatload of furniture. He has powerful friends in Washington and he's come here to build a political career. He'll establish a fine home and find me a fine husband."

She darted an upward glance as she said this, and my face burned at her frankness. "Mister" McGin, office seeker and planning to marry his daughter into some influential Kentucky family had taken the place of roistering, reckless Bully McGin. I bluntly remarked—

"Coming back to the river is another trading venture."

She drew away a bit and coldly replied:

"Yes, if taking care an only daughter should have a suitable husband is a trading venture. One uses care in selecting a horse. Why shouldn't a husband be as carefully selected?"

"I meant no harm. My schooling has been rough."

She dismissed the subject by saying—

"We'll play shopping till they catch up with us." And she pointed at a shop-window containing several books.

"COME inside. I'll buy them for you," I eagerly offered.

She tried to suppress a smile and told me:

"I have boxes and boxes of books on the ark. You're welcome to any or all of them, Jeffry. It's my turn now to furnish the books."

So we stood and stared in silence at the few volumes. I firmly believed the East had deprived me of a wonderful friend when it made a lady of Polly. All of the old faults I had often complained of to myself now stood out as beautiful traits. I knew she was uncomfortable as we stood there in silence, and I was relieved to see her father and Joel coming up the street. Former acquaintances called out boisterous greetings and ran to meet McGin. He replied in kind and seemed to be striving for the old, ruffling swagger. He was a fine, outstanding figure of a man in that busy street. But there was reserve and calculation in his strong face when he was not busy with old acquaintances. I began to imagine he would have his work cut out for him in reviving Bully McGin for the common herd while presenting Mr. Barney McGin to the elite. Polly was quick to take her place by his side; and for a second I was seeing her as I first saw her, a slim boyish figure, as untamed as nature, pressing against the long sword and under the protection of the strong arm.

Joel hurriedly explained:

"McGin wants us to eat with him, but I've told him that he's too busy to be bothered with company. That boat-load of truck must be moved to his house and put in place." It was the first time I could

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remember that Joel omitted the familiar "Bully" in speaking of our friend.

"Then let it be later," said McGin. "You two must make our home your headquarters."

As he and Polly were about to pass on, Greenberry Spiller rushed on to the scene, his aged face beaming with delight. Without any ado he seized their hands and pumped them up and down. I felt embarrassed, and was ashamed of it. It was an "uppity" notion that a good-hearted old man, even if a nuisance at times, was not welcome. It was different when it was "Bully" and not "Mister." There were bystanders and Greenberry was very effusive, and clung to their hands until he had talked on a dozen belts.

"This land of milk and honey, this fair land of promise, is fortunate in your return, sir," he rambled on. "You come as one to lead our people. You was sent into the world to lead. Kentucky will be behind you, sir."

And to my surprize McGin liked it. He tightened his pressure on Greenberry's hand and threw up his head and loudly announced:

"I come here to serve Kentucky, Spiller. There is always a chair at the table for you. Come and go as you will."

Greenberry took him at his word and went with them. Joel and I watched their slow progress up the street, and as different groups stopped them, it was plain from the old man's waving arms that he was doing the talking. And on each such occasion the red head went back and I fancied I could hear McGin announcing his desire to serve Kentucky.

"Both of us should be ashamed of our thoughts," said Joel as he led the way back to the river. "McGin's all right beneath all his finery. The younker has grown up, and of course he must think of her future."

"Naturally," I agreed. "She's a lady. She was frank to tell me her father came here, among other purposes, to find her a suitable husband."

"That shows McGin has a level head. No place on earth so likely for finding a good husband as Kentucky, 'less it be Tennessee. Riches have spoiled many men, but they won't spoil McGin. By the way, Jeffy, he'd wish us not to call him 'Bully.' It's along of the girl. She don't want to go through life as the daughter of Bully Some One— But riches ain't spoiled him. Same old head on them shoulders. Yet he's changed. He's fighting all the time to remember he's a gentleman and to do credit to his girl. It it wa'n't for that he'd be Bully McGin right up to the grave. Well, we'll always have their good-will and they'll always have ours. If we're sort of disappointed it's because we forgot Polly's older and ought to have a father who isn't a tavern brawler and river fighter."

"Did he say how he made his money?"

Joel shook his head; then suggested:

"Maybe by gambling. He was ever a master hand at games of chance and would even bet his head on the turn of a card."

"Not by gambling. Money that comes that way goes as easily."

"Then I haven't an idea. I only know he's prospered and don't want us to call him 'Bully.' He's right in that, too, and ain't to be criticized. He's got a duty to do by his girl, leave her suitably married and well placed in life."

"Those were his words to you."

"Why, yes, Jeffy. You're a keen guesser —Suitably married and well placed in life. A girl's more of a puzzle than a boy. Girl has to have life outlined for her. Boy'll worry along somehow. You'll be glad to hear the Mexican business is up on a shelf for all time. And he was most kind in offering to outfit us for the Missouri trade. I told him we was obliged, but had done fair to middling while he was gone. What say to a trip down the river, or somewheres?"

This suggestion eloquently testified to Joel's disappointment at the change in our old friend.

"Why not a trading venture up the Missouri?" I eagerly asked.

"Tecumseh. If that red storm busts, the Missouri Indians will be dragged into it. Trade must wait till times quiet down."

Because of the red menace and the fact we had accumulated a very respectable profit from our trading we remained in Louisville. We would have entered the flatboat trade to Louisiana if fear of war with either England or France had not made the venture too speculative. So we marked time, taking short trips up and down the river and occasionally visiting Jeffersonville and other towns on the north shore. Signs of a red uprising increased and families from and around Vincennes

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and other interior settlements were continually coming down to the river. Many of these did not feel safe until they were on the Kentucky shore.

And, of course, we were regular callers at the McGin house. Mr. Barney McGin was now a well known and a popular townsman. Scarcely a day passed along the river, or in the taverns, that we did not hear him favorably discussed. He was accepted by the leisure class and his home was brilliantly lighted almost every night when he and Polly were not attending some social event among their immediate neighbors, or at some plantation. The grace and beauty of Polly was the choice theme among the younger men, and there was no home in town before which so many saddle horses were hitched, or led back and forth by black boys while their masters paid respects to the young mistress. Joel and I called at the house outside the social hours and McGin was genuinely pleased to see us. We saw little of Polly, however, as dances and parties and visits to outlying homes took much of her time. We fell into the habit of calling in the morning when McGin was walking in the garden back of the house and before Polly had made up her sleep. In these moments of isolation McGin would hark back to the old days and laugh joyously as he recounted some tavern or river brawl; or some bit of intrigue where he had pitted himself against the cunning of French or Spanish royal governors. Without being requested we never revived these memories when company was present. Greenberry Spiller appeared to have attached himself to the household and repeatedly told us he at last had found the land of milk and honey. Word it, "excellent food and fine liquors" and the old man spoke by the Book.

McGin's generous nature would have made Greenberry welcome under any conditions, but the old man paid for his keep after a fashion. On the street and in the stores, along the river front and in the taverns, he was ever preaching the kindness and the democracy of his benefactor. Our merchants commenced declaring that Barney McGin should be sent to the United States Congress. Prominent men were mentioning him as a likely candidate for governor. Others talked of him as a future senator. It was very obvious to Joel and to me that our old friend was anxious to be accepted as a man fitted for gubernatorial honors, or the United States Senate. In short, he entertained lavishly and was sought by the best people. He kept up an intimate acquaintance with the river people and joked and laughed with veteran boatmen. His care for his daughter was shown when he would take us aside and inquire minutely into the character of the various young men who now were persisting in being burned by the flame.

One night, when all the town was asleep, we were aroused by a terrible roaring. As we leaped from bed Joel cried—

"Sounds like the Judgment Day!"

When we reached the street we found other citizens in various stages of dress running about and wildly asking what had happened.

"It's down by the river!" a man cried. "Some Injun trick!"

"The bottom's shook out of the river! The Ohio's pouring down into the center of the earth!" yelled another.

"Yearthquake's busted the river bottom! River's falling down into hell!" howled a boatman. "Help me save my ark!"

By the time we reached the river bank the roaring was reduced to an ominous muttering. Then we saw lights above the shallows of the rapids, and one of the first citizens to reach the bank was shouting:

"Fulton's steamboat! The *New Orleans* —Fulton's boat that walks on water!"

One of the crew came along and explained that the unique craft was held up by the shallows of the rapids and that the deafening noise we had heard was steam blowing off from the boilers.

THERE was no more sleep that night. The whole city seemed to be gathered along the river front, waiting for dawn. With the first light we saw the strange craft, a boat of a hundred tons burden and having a queer contraption of a paddle-wheel at the stern, and equipped with two masts.

After a long study I said:

"She's a failure, Joel. See her masts? She don't even trust herself."

"The shallows held her up, same as they might an ark," he replied. "She came this far. There's nothing to stop her going on to the gulf when the water's up."

"Anything of wood can float downstream. When she bucks the current and

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goes up-stream will be the time to shout," I insisted.

A light hand touched my shoulder and I wheeled to meet the smiling face Polly. She was enveloped in a long cloak and, as usual, was under her father's arm. "It's the end of the good old flatboat days, Jeffry," she greeted.

"No, no," quickly corrected her father. "The foundations of the Ohio and Mississippi lands is based on the skill and daring of our boatmen. They will ever be needed if the Western country is to prosper."

"Hooray for McGin! Old river man hisself once, and not too stuck-up to remember it!" shouted a boatman. "Wait and watch the —— thing try to back out."

I began to believe Polly had spoken the truth, just as I believed her astute father had talked for political effect. And my growing belief saddened me. I was no boatman; but the romance and glamor of the mighty rivers emanated from the hardihood and daring of that distinct class of men who conquered rivers. Although their lives were crude and rough by later standards, and although some were vicious and cruel, yet as a class they were never surpassed for genuine grit. The conquest of the Ohio and the Mississippi could never have been accomplished by refinements; only by fighting nerve.

The scepticism of all of us was soon routed. Being unable to proceed because of low water the *New Orleans* turned about and made several trips to Cincinnati. But to return to that eventful morning. While we stood watching the boat McGin left Polly with some of her women friends and came up behind us and threw his arms over our shoulders and fiercely demanded—

"What the —— do you two think you're doing?"

"Watching this new-fangled boat, McGin," said Joel, and he reached up and affectionately grasped the arm over his shoulder.

"But you've not been rooted to this spot for the last week," he continued. "I haven't seen hide nor hair of you for six or seven days. Now you two come up to dinner tonight."

"But—" lamely began Joel.

"No 'buts' about it. You and Jeffry be there. The Kentucky Fire gives a dinner. I've accepted a captain's commission in General Harrison's army that goes shortly to teach the Tecumseh Fire a much needed lesson. I want you two men at my Fire tonight. Promise."

"If you'll take us as you find us—" Joel began.

"I'll take you by the neck and break it if you make any more foolish talk, old friend," growled McGin. Then with a mighty clap on the shoulder of each he left us to accept an invitation to board the boat.

Murmurs of approval rippled through the crowd as McGin and Polly went down the bank to a skiff. The proprietor of the shop where I had bought my books told me:

"With a bit of a military record Mr. McGin can have high office for the talking. The army is the cart that'll haul a man into high places."

This was true. Even then the army was about to haul General Harrison to renown and to the Presidency of the United States; and incidentally to haul him to a death brought about by the pestering demands of office-seekers.

That night, dressed in our best, Joel and I repaired to the three-story brick structure where we found a large company of fighting border men and many of the gentility. Men in fringed hunting-shirts were at ease in their rich surroundings, for they were guests of their captain, not of Barney McGin, gentleman. Polly passed through the long drawing-rooms and graciously greeted the company and earnestly requested some of the veterans to look after her father. To me she said, "Come back safe, Jeffry."

When she came to Joel she threw her arms about his neck and kissed him, and then ran away with every young gallant staring after her most amorously.

As we were passing into the supper-table I met Margy. She cast a quick glance about and whispered to me:

"She's a fine lady, Jeffry, and always the Princess. But she isn't spoiled. She's crying her eyes out in her room."

Never was McGin at better advantage than on this night while surrounded by fighting men. Each knew his record. Each was glad to follow him. When the dishes were cleared away and the liquor was brought on he threw off his coat and waistcoat and toasted General Harrison and the Army and Tecumseh, the latter not very complimentarily. Wild yells greeted this, and men got in each other's way in their

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efforts to be first in putting their names down on the company rolls.

Joel whispered in my ear:

"One of us is enough. You must stay here."

Then he was forcing himself ahead of several young beaux. When he straightened after writing his name, the extent of his epistolary ability I was ready to take his place, having forced several young gay blades aside. His face was grave as I signed my name, but he dared not seek to discourage me. I met his mute remonstrance with a shake of the head, and murmured—

"Together—always together."

There followed much drinking, many speeches, wild enthusiasm. Our captain, with his red hair in disorder, became Bully McGin again, and before we separated he took his long sword from the wall and pressed the blade to his lips and made a speech that set my nerves to tingling and my heart to jumping and my throat to choking until it seemed as if I could not wait to be at the fighting. Never have I seen a finer figure of man than he presented as he stood there with his head thrown back, his right shirtsleeve rolled up, and the long sword held high.

Within two minutes after we had left the house a young planter, excited by liquor and war-talk, ran his horse over me in the street and left me insensible and with a broken collar-bone. McGin, standing in the doorway, heard Joel's cry of alarm and was one of the first to reach us. He gathered me up in his arms as if I were a child, shouted for some one to bring a doctor, and carried me indoors and up the stairs to a bedchamber. While waiting for the doctor to come he examined me and with a great sigh of relief said:

"Thank God it's only a busted bone. He must stay here till it's mended."

"I must go with the Army," I insisted.

"You'll be no good to General Harrison till the shoulder's mended. If the fighting isn't over before you're fit to travel you can find us. The company starts at once. You'll be taken good care of here. If not for the fun awaiting us north of the river, there's not a young buck in Kentucky who wouldn't gladly break both shoulders and legs to be laid up in Captain McGin's house."

His words comforted me none. I suffered mental agony at the thought of Joel's going without me. After the doctor had come and gone, and Polly had stopped at the door to express her sympathy, I seized Joel's hand and told him:

"You can't go. You must stay and get me back to our rooms and take care of me."

"It's mortal hard to leave you, Jeffy, although I had a notion your little mother wouldn't want you to go."

"You can't go. My mother would be sorry to think I'm being left behind."

"Your hurt's nothing. You'll git good care here. Better'n I could give. Greenberry Spiller will be handy to cheer you up. And there's Margy and Polly. But my name's writ on the rolls, and writ down after a —— hard struggle. You wouldn't be selfish enough to have me hold back. If I stayed here, I'd never hold up my head again."

He paused and appeared to be uneasy. I knew he was troubled. Suddenly I saw a picture of him dead on a red battlefield. I cried out:

"You'll be killed! I'll never see you again!"

"Hush! All must die sometime. Not that any hurt will come to me. Don't send me away feeling uncommon sad, Jeffy."

"When do you go?" I asked dully.

"This is good-by. A courier came along with the doctor. We're to start as soon as we can round up most of the men, leaving t'others to follow."

A sudden effort to rise hurt me, and I groaned—

"Then this is good-by, Joel."

"Only for a bit, Jeffy. Good-by, and God be good to you." And he bent over me and awkwardly smoothed my hair, and was stumbling from the room before my choking throat would permit me to speak.

I STUFFED bedclothes into my mouth to stifle my sobs, for the presentment abided that I should never see him alive again. I do not know how long I suffered this mental agony, or what strange turns it took. I know Margy was in the room and bent over me and quietly withdrew. The early light was filtering through the long windows when McGin entered, looking very masterful and fine in his new uniform. His face was drawn and hard as he sat down beside me and whispered:

"I hate to bother a man who's been hurt

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Just a few words, Jeffry." He hesitated a moment, then confessed. "It's hard for me to say."

"Then it must be very disagreeable," I mumbled. "I've said good-by to Joel. Nothing can be as disagreeable as that."

"You've made it a bit easier. Jeffry, you know the one thing on earth I love is the Princess."

"Of course."

"The McGins are quick to love and to fight."

"I believe it."

"I look high for the Princess. But she'll be quick to love. It's harder than I thought."

"Say it in a mouthful."

"Good. I'll kill the man who makes love to my daughter without first getting my permission."

Then I knew what he was driving at.

"You're warning me?" I gasped. "You thought there was need? God forbid!"

"——! A McGin beneath you?" he growled.

"Have done bullying. Polly is a lady. I'm a broken-shouldered trader. Polly's affections are nothing to me. Mine are nothing to her. I am grieving for my one friend. Joel will not come back to me."

Then he was all tenderness, and he bitterly condemned himself.

"I'm a cursed blunderer to come in here and say what I have. But I'm fair upset about the Princess. If ever she takes the notion— Well, Jeffry, look after the women when you get about. I'm sorry for your hurts."

"When I get about I shall cross the river and find the fighting. Give my love to Joel— No, don't. We've said good-by. It would only make him feel worse."

He shook my hand in silence and went away. He must have spoken to Margy, for she came to me almost immediately.

She passed her hand over my head to see if it was feverish and murmured:

"It's morning. You've had no rest. Try and sleep."

I did doze off, but was aroused by evil dreams. I saw Joel dead, with Tecumseh's savages, led by Dancer, exulting over him.

The doctor came and worked over me a bit and told me I was getting along nicely, but must keep quiet. He told me Captain McGin and the bulk of his riflemen had crossed the river. After he left, Polly and Margy visited me, bringing an armful of books. The girl displayed some of her old spirit in taunting me for trying to knock down a horse. They remained for some time and on their leaving Greenberry Spiller, rather blood-shot of eye, tiptoed in with a great pretense at stealth, although my open eyes were watching him.

"You've been drinking too much," I told him.

"I've found a rare resting-place under the fig-tree of a friend. If he showers me with oil and nectar, why should I hurt his finest feelings by refusing. This is the Promised Land—this house, and the cellar. Ah, Jeffry, such a comfortable place; such a comfortable life!"

"It's killing you. Your eyes look those of sick fish."

"I'd rather die of comfortable days than of starvation. Soft beds, good liquor, and niggers to boss around! It's worth my life of hard labor to be here soft and snug."

"You're to stay here while the captain's away?"

"Of course. Why the day he found me in a tavern he said, 'Greenberry, old friend, what do you mean? I wouldn't even let your dog stay in a tavern so long as I have a home.' All's well— Milk and honey flowing— Rye whisky that'll grow me a new set of teeth— A black boy who does nothing but wait on me."

"Don't try to drink all the whisky at one sitting," I warned.

If he was something of a fraud he was an amiable one. If given to deceit he deceived himself first and most thoroughly. It was restful to hear his droning talk. He was responsible for much of McGin's vogue in the town. From the first time he had set eyes on McGin he had vowed he would place him in the Senate or the governor's chair. According to his long recital, McGin had never discovered any political possibilities in himself until Greenberry Spiller took him aside and revealed the truth.

"I'll put him through yet," he finally concluded.

After he left me, I managed to dress, and with my right arm held in place by the sling and the empty sleeve flapping I went down stairs prepared to have a storm with Polly. But it was Margy I encountered in the hall; and she relieved me by saying Polly was out riding. She demanded to know what

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I was up to; and when I told her I was going to my lodgings, she exclaimed:

"Lodgings! Who's to care for you? Isn't this house good enough for you?"

"It's too good. I'm not used to being coddled. The doctor says it'll be three weeks before the collar-bone is mended. There's no need of my being in bed. I must be up and about. If I need any help Greenberry Spiller can come over at night and take Joel's room. I'm not running away. I'll drop in here each day."

And say what she would I went to my lodgings and tried to reorganize my thoughts. Joel would come back to me, I kept telling myself; while in my heart I believed I never would see him again. Staying at the McGin house was impossible, especially so after what McGin had said. His words were ringing in my ears when I was not brooding over Joel. It made me feel self-conscious and I feared betraying myself if left alone with Polly.

I had finished one pipe when Greenberry came. His voice was a trifle thick from too much rye whisky and his mood was inclined to be bitter. He blamed Margy for ousting him from an ideal environment:

"Not that I ain't keen to watch over you, Jeffry, but there's times when you want to be alone. Solitude is good for a man's soul. If I didn't have to be so busy making a governor out of an old river bully I'd love to sit down alone and count my blessings. But that woman seems to think you're helpless."

"Just a little awkward in getting into my clothes. If I want you I'll let you know. My hurt is nothing. In three weeks I'll be as good as new. I shall be up to the house each day. You needn't bother to come here unless I say the word. But, Greenberry, stronger men than you have tried to drink all the Kentucky whisky that's made; and all have failed."

"Lawdy! Don't I know it? Haven't I told drinking-men all my life that temperance makes a daily snort taste better? If there's anything I can do—"

"Not a thing. I want to be alone."

He departed, praising the beauties of solitude, and I resumed my lonely meditations. I was aroused by a rap on the door and on opening it found Margy. She called down the stairs:

"He's awake. Come up, my pretty."

Polly McGin, seething and raging like a diminutive tempest, raced up the stairs and exploded into the room. She was like the old Polly as she stood there with her red hair disheveled and talking steadily for five minutes. I was fiercely berated for being ungrateful, for being filled with false pride, for being untrue to my old friends. Altogether I was an impossible young man. When she had run down for want of breath I told her:

"Every word you've said is the solemn truth, Polly. But who wants a make-believe invalid cluttering up a house? Nothing's the matter with me except a broken collar-bone."

"Will you come back to the house where my father left you and where you belong?" she demanded.

"I'll call each day—" But she was running down the stairs at a dangerous pace.

"Poor child!" sighed Margy. "God send her father back safely. She's lived under his long arm so long, I dread to think what would become of her if harm comes to him."

"Oh, the captain's all right. He and Joel will be returning inside of two months—She's peppery as ever."

"When she forgets her schooling. It was mighty hard for her at first. Her tutors had a miserable time of it for a while. But she's wonderful. It ain't her fault she's been raised wrong. I mustn't stop."

THE next day I went to the house, but as I went up the steps Polly and a party of young women and their beaux were riding away. She waved her hand to me. Young George Knolton, too young for war, was her escort. He scowled heavily at me. His family, living on a fine plantation a few miles out, was influential, and the lad naturally was crazy in love with Polly. I visited with Margy and suspected she was worried. I frankly asked her what was on her mind.

"It's Pretty's encouraging that young Knolton," she sighed. "He's the only child and brought up to believe he can have anything he wants."

I had never thought that Polly would be interested in a callow youth, and the suggestion made me feel disagreeable. She was older in experience than the young ladies she associated with. Her roving life with her father had given her a shrewd, mature mind. How one of her dramatic

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experiences could be attracted to young Knolton was beyond my comprehension. Then Margy was dispelling the notion by hastily saying:

"Of course young Knolton can't have Polly. He just amuses her. But I'm fearing the young fool will kill himself, or do something wretched, when he wakes up."

I assured her she had no cause to worry. Young Knolton and his breed were too selfish to indulge in anything so madly heroic as suicide because of an unrequited love.

Each day's program was much like another. I called at the house and invariably found Polly out, or on the point of departing. She was immensely popular, and though the belles might be jealous yet they needs must be with her or miss the company of the young men. Each day I had a talk with Greenberry and learned he was spending much of his time along the river front, singing the praises of Bully McGin to the boatmen. One day I strolled down to Bear Grass Creek and met my old enemy and ally, Shank. He had lost more of his teeth in some brawl and his mouth looked cavernous as he grinned at me and shook my left hand heartily.

He wanted to know who had put my arm in a sling and seemed to be pleased to learn it was an accident. He talked with great relish of the fight at the Natchez landing, when I had gone to his aid, but proudly boasted, "Yet that wring wa'n't nothing to the one I had the luck to git into last trip down. Cost me some teeth, but 'twas worth it. Such a fight I never see. They'll still be talking about it, way down to Orleans— Say, this Bully McGin's a most proper man. He ain't uppity. He don't forgit old days and friends now he's got a big house and niggers to wait on him. We Kentucky men 'low he'll make a mighty good governor."

"One of the best. Get all the boys behind him."

In the two days Shank was at the creek I talked much with him and discovered I liked him. He embarrassed me by telling his friends in my presence how I had bested him, and by offering to wager his season's earnings I could do the same to them. Fortunately my hurt saved me from being compelled to show my mettle.

I improved rapidly and at last the doctor told me to discard the sling, and assured me the bone had knit perfectly and that I was all right. Polly had received several letters from her father and each had contained a message from Joel to me. I had written him in the captain's care. No battle had taken place and both men were well. With my spirits soaring I hastened from the doctor's house to the McGin mansion, swinging my released arm most enthusiastically. I ran up the steps and asked for Polly. Margy dismissed the maid and whispered:

"In the garden alone. Some sort of a tantrum. Go to her, but speak softly, Jeffry."

I found her sulking by the sun-dial. On beholding me she jumped to her feet and advanced and demanded—

"Is your arm all well?"

"All well."

"You know George Knolton?"

"By sight. His kind do not speak to the working class."

"He's a beast!"

"I know he's a pretty young fellow whose folks can't stop him from running wild. When he comes into the property he'll spend every dollar inside of the first twelve months. But a beast? I'd say he was a badly raised young cub."

"You're to find him and whip him soundly."

I remembered Shank. I became very wary. Young Knolton would not make a fistful for me. It would be like striking a peevish child. Yet, if he had shown the girl any disrespect—

"See here, Polly. You've kept Knolton dancing attendance on you even when you knew he was crazy in love. If he insulted you I'll hunt him up. What's he done?"

She stared in amazement; then gasped:

"A pretty way to offer service! You expect me to explain his wrong-doing?"

"Just to assure me he has treated you uncivilly."

"I could say what I've said to you to any young man of my acquaintance and he would be on his errand. You stop to talk!"

"You yourself can lick that young cub so quickly he'd think he was always whipped," I reminded her. "If he was a man grown I'd be on my errand. But he's a cub. You've kept him hanging around you. From what I've seen of him he's about as dangerous as a month-old puppy. I just want to be sure this isn't one of your spells."

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"You're as cold-blooded and calculating as a Yankee!" she sneered. "The fellow kissed me! Now are you satisfied that I know when I have been insulted?"

I was amazed to discover how very beautiful she was when angry; and yet I had seen her angry many times. For the life of me I could not feel harsh toward young George Knolton. Perhaps it was his only worthwhile endeavor during his young riotous life.

"We can't have any of that," I stoutly told her. "But don't encourage these lovesick youngsters. You were left in my charge—"

"Oh, no!" she hotly broke in. "You were left in my charge, and you preferred your lodging-house to my home. This Knolton seemed to be in very miserable spirits and out of kindness I tried to cheer him up. It may have been a liquor mood. But that doesn't help any."

"Not a bit! A man in his senses wouldn't have done it."

She eyed me suspiciously, but my face was grave enough. She continued:

"I felt sorry for him when he told me about the lonely life he led; and when I tried to show sympathy by patting his shoulder— Now go and whip him!"

I was used to her transient moods. I sought to temporize. I told her—

"If twenty-four hours from now you feel the same about the poor simpleton I'll punish him."

"Good land! You'll wait. He's at the tavern, probably boasting, and you'll wait?"

"No, I'll find him. He's a brainless young spendthrift, and tomorrow you'll likely blame me for doing what you now ask. But I'll find him and give him his needings. But you must stop patting young men on the shoulder."

I LEFT her before she could frame a reply and hurried down the main street toward the tavern the young beaux patronized. I disliked the business. Polly had demonstrated her ability to keep a dozen lovesick swains running after her. I had seen her subtly encourage the backward, and icily repel the overconfident. Young Knolton was the most abject of all her suitors. As for his rash act at least he scarcely could be blamed for the desire. However, I was the watchdog and Polly McGin must not be kissed against her will. And I swung into the tavern after working my mind up to a vicious pitch. To my surprize Knolton was alone in one corner, his back to the door. The light was poor in the corner and he did not heed my approach until I stood behind his chair. I clamped a hand down on his shoulder and jerked him half around. Then I released him and stood nonplussed. He had been weeping!

Without seeming to sense any hostile purpose in my heavy hand he began:

"Jeffry Lang, you're honest and I trust you. I want you to do me a service. Send word to my father I'm off to help Harrison kill the Indians."

"You're drunk! Maudlin drunk! You young beast!"

"Never more sober," he groaned. "You can't call me anything that'll hurt me now. I've had the greatest disappointment a man can ever have. I believed I was acceptable where I never stood a chance. Life's rotten. I first planned to shoot myself, but that would make the folks feel bad. So I'm off to join the army and find a grave."

I sat down at the end of the table and stared at his grim face and quivering lips. I sternly told him—

"A certain young lady we won't mention by name, tells me you have misbehaved toward her."

"Whatever she thinks and says is the truth," he moaned. "But when you're crazy over a beautiful girl and you believe she favors you, and you make a mistake and finds out she loathes you— Oh, the ——! Life's rotten. I'd thank you if you'd plant that table knife in my heart!"

The dismaying spectacle of fresh tears made me feel very uncomfortable; and somehow I felt irritated at Polly. He was such a miserable little ruin for her to be, in part, responsible for. Then he was running on:

"I thought she favored me. If I hurt her feelings and she can't wait for me to get killed by Tecumseh I'll go down to the river and shoot myself."

"That would be throwing the blame on the lady. Give the Indians a chance. You start tonight?"

He nodded dismally:

"Sent a boy for my brown mare. He'll fetch her here this evening."

"Stay here till the boy comes. Don't go wandering around. I shall see you again."

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Polly was pacing up and down the garden when I entered. Her small face betrayed some strong emotion as she greeted—"Well, you found him?"

"Yes."

"You whipped him?"

"He was weeping when I found him. It's hard to strike a man under almost any circumstances when he is weeping. He said you were right in anything you said. He offered to kill himself. He asked me to kill him. When a man's eager to die, fisticuffs won't hurt him."

"He'll harm himself?" And now she was afraid.

"No. He goes to join Harrison's army."

"I've forgotten him and his rudeness. I'm glad you did not punish him. But it's plain you considered your own feelings, not mine. Another time I'll remember not to appeal to you." Now she was very grand and haughty.

"You stop your foolishness, Polly. You've been making believe. I haven't much doubt but what you were more to blame than he. You had your wits. He's infatuated and always will be empty-headed."

"You miserable one!" she gasped. "You dare to talk to me like that! I don't want to see you again."

"You had your wish before you spoke. I'm off to join the army. Margy and Greenberry can look after you."

"Jeffry!" she whispered. "Tell me you don't mean it. I'm sorry. Forgive me and forget it."

"There's nothing to forgive, Polly. You're wonderful. And I'm too homespun to play watch-dog. And I'm keen to find Joel and be at his side when the army gets a crack at the Indians. I'm crossing tonight with young Knolton."

CHAPTER VIII

A PROPHET WITHOUT HONOR

YOUNG KNOLTON and I overtook the Army at Fort Harrison* the very day that defense was completed and the Army about to advance on Tippecanoe, the Prophet's town. None of the Kentucky men of my acquaintance were there, but were to join the army farther up the Wabash. As young Knolton had talked much about "finding a grave," and as his downcast state of mind might prompt him to some foolishness, I decided to leave him behind if it were possible. I secured an audience with Lieutenant Colonel Miller, who was left in command of the small garrison. As a result of this talk Knolton was ordered to remain as a fort-soldier, greatly to his disgust. He had no idea I was instrumental in keeping him back from the fighting.

General Harrison, commander of the expedition by virtue of his office as territorial governor, selected the route on the northwest side of the Wabash, although it was the longer. But the path on the southern bank was woody and excellent for a red ambush. Our general had had his training with Mad Anthony Wayne in 1794, and he was quick to realize the importance of deceiving any of the Prophet's spies who were watching us. He not only had men reconnoiter the southeastern bank and make the beginning of a wagon-road, but he also had the bulk of the army start along that side. We numbered about a thousand, including three hundred dragoons and mounted riflemen. I was of the latter body. On the last day of October, after passing Big Raccoon Creek, we crossed to the west bank;† and it was here we found the advance of the Kentucky men waiting for us. And I found Joel.

He stood motionless beside his horse and stared at me incredulously for a few moments; then he was rushing upon me and clutching both my hands, but it was half a minute before he could speak. Then all he could say was:

"Why did you come, Jeffy? Why did you come?"

McGin next discovered me and came up; and his first question was about Polly. And why was I not back in Louisville where I belonged? Joel was in a black mood, and whenever I glanced at him he was watching me. McGin was in his element now that he had cast political craft aside and was facing the prospect of a fight. He was dearly loved by his men, and the veneer of a fine gentleman was sloughed as easily as he discarded his coat at mid-day. He was Bully McGin once more, incomparable and lovable. On November second we halted long enough to build a block-house, some twenty-five feet square, on the river bank, and near the mouth of the Vermilion. Eight men

*Terre Haute

†Near modern Montezuma, Parke County.

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were left here to protect the boats bringing up supplies for the army. On this same day we of the mounted riflemen had scouted ahead to find a path which would avoid the dangerous passes over the twenty miles of high cliffs along Pine Creek. One path marked an Indian attack on General George Rogers Clark in 1786, and an ambush of a portion of General Harmar's troops in 1790. We found fresh signs of Indians here, but saw no warriors. The route we selected crossed where the creek ran through a strip of prairie. On the fifth we were within eleven miles of Tippecanoe, and we felt we were on the edge of a big battle. That is, almost all of us believed this. But there were some pessimistic ones who feared the Indians would refuse to fight.

From our camp on the fifth we beheld the open prairie stretching north farther than the eye could follow. Had Greenberry Spiller been there I know he would have declared it to be the land of milk and honey. To all of us who had not visited the region before, it was a revelation, and through my mind filtered pictures of homes and plantations with vast areas of corn taking the place of the prairie grasses.

We had seen no Indians. McGin bitterly complained to Joel and me:

"No military reputation will be won up here chasing nothing! If we find the savages we'll smoke and leave a peace talk and turn back!"

"There may be no fighting," slowly agreed Joel. "The general's orders are to keep the peace if possible. He's hoping the interpreters he sent out will bring in some of the critters so we can have a council."

A volunteer from Jeffersonville shrewdly reminded:

"That Prophet is jealous of his brother. If Tecumseh was ahead I'd say there'd be no fighting. But he's away and the Prophet may try to steal some glory by having a fling at us.

"There'll be a lot of pow-wowing, and we'll smoke a pipe and the army will go back. But once we're down on the river the Indians will be up to their old capers. That's the way I see it now."

"I heard an officer say they'd be sure to attack when they learn we have no cannon," I remarked.

"Cannon!" jeered McGin. "Our mounted riflemen can ride through all the savages the Prophet can raise."

"No, no, Bully," remonstrated Joel, who unconsciously reverted to the old familiar name. "Don't fool yourself with any such notion. Cannon never did seem to help whip the Indians, but they're mortal scared of them. We'll either march to the town and back without a fight, only to be called out again before snow falls; or the Prophet will show his men his magic bowl filled with his sacred beans and then go into one of his fits. If he uses the bowl he'll make a terrible fighting man out of a coward. And there's mighty few cowards among the Indians up here, even if they don't like to fight in our way."

Until we reached the open country we had been reminded of winter's coming by the bright coloring of the more persistent foliage, and the bleak, bare branches of the first trees to lose their leaves. We had no fear of the enemy if they showed themselves in the open, as we could easily stand off twice our number or more. The tables might be reversed if the Indians selected the battle-ground and we were forced to fight in timber. For there was no more than one man in twenty in the army who had ever been in any kind of a battle.

On the sixth we advanced to within five or six miles of the Prophet's town, and now we saw Indians a-plenty. They were hovering around us, out of gunshot, on every side. Moving in small bands they watched every move we made. Our general repeatedly sent half-bloods with a talk to these shifting groups; but the Indians either fell back, or turned our messengers back, by their threatening gestures. Our general endeavored to carry out the Secretary of War's orders and preserve the peace, and he persisted in sending messages. He made another attempt, sending a talk to a large body drawn up across our line of advance. The result was the same.

Our general now changed the order of march to conform with what the Wayne campaign had taught him to be best. The infantry advanced in two columns on both sides of the path. Ahead and behind and on the flanks rode the dragoons and mounted riflemen. The troops, also, were broken into short columns, so they could function more rapidly and effectively in case of an ambush, or surprise attack. We had been skirting the prairie and moving parallel to the river. Now we entered open woods and found the ground broken by many small

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ravines. When within less than two miles of the town we could see that the Indians were alarmed. Captain Toussaint Dubois of Vincennes volunteered to try for the last time to deliver the general's talk. Waving a flag of truce he walked boldly toward the Indians. The latter made threatening gestures and as he persisted in advancing they tried to cut him off from the army.

General Harrison told his officers he had exhausted every effort to make a peace and that the tribes must be punished. Suddenly the demeanor of the red men changed and three of their warriors approached, signaling for a conference. They brought a talk from the Prophet: He did not understand why an army should come to his town. He wished for peace and had sent messages to this effect by some Delaware and Miami men. These men, explained his word-bearer, had carried their white wampum down the other side of the river and thereby had missed the army. He said the army was frightening the women and children. He asked that we camp back from the Wabash on a creek, within a mile of the town, and hold a big peace-council on the morrow. The general agreed to this request, and he sent Majors Taylor and Clark, and Quartermaster Piatt to examine the proposed camping-site. Some of us Kentuckians rode with these officers. The spot was all that could be desired for a camp, provided peace was to be concluded. The general was still in council with the three warriors when his officers brought back their report. He told the word-bearers he would camp where the Prophet designated on their promise to refrain from hostilities until after the morrow's council. They readily assured him the tribes only desired a lasting peace. They returned to the village and the army went into camp.

GENERAL HARRISON revealed his suspicion of the Indians' sincerity by telling his officers he did not like the camping-place. He publicly declared the location to be excellent for regulars who might be opposed to regulars, but to be very undesirable if a cunning savage were the foe. The rank and file were well satisfied, however, as the ground was dry oak land, fully ten feet above the wet prairie in front, or between the little table-land and the village, and even higher above the marshy land along the creek in the rear. The creek, flowing quite close to the rear bank, was a sluggish stream and was almost hidden from view by willow thickets and bushes.

The general was very particular in arranging the camp, and, because of the slope, the lines formed an irregular parallelogram. The front faced the town, and the rear ran southwest. The rear line being more irregular than the right flank was but eighty yards wide, while the left flank was a hundred and fifty. A battalion of United States Infantry, under Major George Rogers Clark Floyd, was posted on the front and was flanked on left and right by three companies of Indiana militia under Col. Joe Bartholomew. Another battalion of infantry, under the immediate command of Captain Robert C. Barton, was posted in the rear, flanked on the right by four companies of Indiana militia, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Luke Decker. The right flank was filled by Captain Spear Spencer's mounted riflemen, and the left by riflemen under Major Samuel Wells.

This was the arrangement of the camp, with the officers' tents, the baggage and wagons in the center. It was my bad luck to be separated from Joel and McGin, although I had enrolled with McGin. But the left flank needed more men and I was among those taken from the right to serve in Colonel Frederick Geiger's company in the northwest angle and near the creek.

The camp was laid out and completed during the afternoon of the sixth, and after supper General Harrison issued his orders for the night. If attacked, each line must hold its ground until relieved. In event of a night attack the mounted men were to parade dismounted and act as reserve corps. During the night two captains' guards, of forty-two men each, and two subalterns' guards, of twenty each, were to be on duty under the command of the field-officer of the day.

A drizzling rain set in as I rolled in my blankets under a wagon and went to sleep. Being very nervous, I awoke at short intervals. As the night wore on I awoke to find the moon trying to break through the thinning clouds and shedding a faint light.

It was the general's habit to rise at four o'clock and call the troops to arms and keep them so until daylight. On the morning of the seventh I was aroused by a man waking the drummer near me. I moved to the

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position of my company near the creek just as General Harrison was revealed by a camp-fire as he sat between the flaps of his tent, pulling on one of his boots. Then a rifle was fired just ahead of me, and Steve Mars, a Kentucky man, was yelling:

"Injuns! Every one up! Injuns coming!"

Instantly there came a murderous volley from the unseen savages. Several of Geiger's men were hit. I never heard such horrible screaming as that following the open volley. General Harrison was calling loudly to his servant to bring up his horse, but the fellow was so frightened he could not remember where he had tied the mount. Major Taylor sent one of his and the general mounted just as his aide rode up on the white. The next second several Indians had burst through our lines from the creek, and two of these fired on the aide* and killed him. Undoubtedly they believed they had slain the general. The next moment each of these invaders was a dead man.

It was very dark and we could see nothing. Men behind me were running about, putting out the camp-fires. There was nothing but darkness over the wet lands except as guns spurted fire. One of my first impressions was amazement at the lack of confusion. Inside of two minutes we all were settled down to fighting the invisible foe. We also were hidden, except when they crept close and could make out our crouching figures against the vague sky-line. The men who first broke through, as I learned later, were Winnebagoes. They were worked up to a fanatical courage because of the Prophet's assurance no bullets could harm them. Yet they had died easily enough. In a lull in the howling and the gun-fire came a new note. The deep voice of an Indian chanting his medicine-song. It came from some distance, and after I once heard it I did not lose it even when the yelling and volleys were renewed. It was the Prophet, on a low hill out of harm's way, singing his new song which was to blind us in darkness while making us perfectly visible to the foe.

In a very short time we of Geiger's company had suffered severely and our left was badly broken. Barton's company, facing the creek and extending at right angles from our left, likewise suffered from the first onslaught. General Harrison rode up and ordered Cook's and Peters' companies to shift from the center of the rear to a position across the northwest angle. With this support we stiffened our resistance and tenaciously held the bloody corner.

Barely had this maneuver been completed before a sharp firing broke out at the northeast angle. Washington Johns, of Vincennes, a friend of the general, and serving as quartermaster of the dragoons, came running up to Harrison and called out that Major Joe Daviess wished permission to repel the new attack by a charge of infantry.

"Tell Major Daviess to be patient," replied the general.

The firing at the northeast angle grew more vicious. In a few moments another messenger came up from Daviess, stating that the Indians were stationed in some timber within twenty paces of the line, and a request for permission to dislodge these. The same reply was given.

But Daviess was not one to be denied when bearing the brunt of fire from a hidden foe. For the third time he sent word the enemy were doing much mischief. This time the general answered:

"He has heard my opinion twice. He may use his own discretion."

Taking but twenty of his dragoons, and conspicuous in the darkness because of his white blanket-coat, Daviess charged the trees and fallen timber. He found no enemy in front but was attacked on the flank. He was mortally wounded and was brought back only by the desperate efforts of his men. Captain Josiah Snelling promptly drove the Indians from cover with his company of regulars.

The battle now became general. We were being attacked along the entire front, on both flanks and at different points in the rear. Whenever one had time to listen he could catch a bit of the monotonous chanting from the low hill where the Prophet sang his medicine-song. The fighting was especially furious on the right flank where Joel and McGin were stationed, and on Lieutenant Warwick's company, forming with Spencer's men the southwest angle.

As I ran back to find more powder I saw a young fellow, no older than Knolton, squatting before a small blaze he had managed to get to burning from the scattered embers of a camp-fire. . The lock of

*Abraham Owen, killed close to northwest angle.

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his gun was out of order and he was trying to fix it.

"Git away from that fire, you —— fool!" yelled one man.

"You're killing yourself!" howled another.

And the bullets were singing into and around the patch of light most venomously. The young fellow puckered his brows and frowned as the lock remained stubborn. As I grabbed him by the shoulder to drag him away he whooped joyously and cried:

"Got it all good now! Now I'll show 'em some shooting that is shooting."

Where our angle had been pushed back a bit a Winnebago man advanced to the glowing bed of coals of a fire and crouched by it to pick his flint. Several shots were fired at him at close range but the Prophet's medicine-song seemed to cover him. Then a bullet struck his head and he fell into the coals. One of the regulars ran to him and made a gruesome job of securing the scalp. He came back waving it and shouting loudly and fell at our feet dying.

A loud cry started on the right flank and rapidly traveled to our position, "Cap'n Spencer's done for!" Then a second sad news item was relayed to us. "Cap'n Spencer's leftenant's killed."

The officers, following our general's example, were foremost in places of danger. One youngster I could have taken over my knee and slapped, came along our hot position, and his feverish excitement took the form of jeering.

"You fellows were afraid you wouldn't get a fight. Then why don't you fight?" he yelled at us.

"We've lost our courage, sonny," bawled a graybearded veteran of Harmar's, Sinclair's and Wayne's wars.

Hysterical laughter greeted this response, followed by hearty cheers for the youngster.

Then from the southwest angle came the sad intelligence—

"Cap'n Jake Warwick's shot to pieces!"

COMPANY commanders were ordered to keep their losses from being announced. With Spencer gone, the right flank was in danger, as the savages were determined to break the line. Should they succeed, they would pour into the camp and attack front, rear and left flank from behind. As the fighting behind grew in intensity, I know every one of us at the bloody corner feared to find an ax in the back of his head. General Harrison sent Robb's riflemen to support Spencer's men. He was continually riding up and down the length of the camp, bullet holes in the rim of his hat, and loudly commanding:

"Hold your line till daybreak! We'll drive them when the light comes! Hold that line!"

"What'n —— be we doing if we ain't doing that?" querulously croaked the graybeard.

Now I was conscious of the two voices, red and white. The Prophet howling his medicine-song and our general exhorting us to maintain our positions. In the fighting in the darkness I took my part but saw but little to tell. The Indians were charging us on all sides with a boldness contrary to red custom and caution. I loaded and fired without clearly seeing a target. We shot at the flash of their guns, or when a man got near enough to be vaguely discernible. When a dark shape was almost upon me, I struck the butt of my rifle against a head and heard bone crack. I did this without having time to think.

At last the light came. The change was so gradual and the powder smoke so thick, we didn't sense it at first. A man in Peters' company behind us howled:

"Sunrise! Sunrise! Now we'll give them ——!"

And we realized the waiting was over and cheered loudly and exultingly.

Now we were glimpsing naked, painted bodies and I neatly picked off a Chippewa man wearing a pair of buffalo horns and pounding his medicine-drum as he danced grotesquely ahead of a charging band. The enemy regretted the coming of day in the same degree that we were welcoming it. Rattles of deer-hoofs sounded for another charge, and the entire force concentrated in a desperate attempt to break through the two flanks. I glanced behind me toward Joel's position and saw only smoke, wounded men being brought to a shelter at the wagons and baggage and the figure of our general riding from point to point. Then the savages struck our line. But now we could see, and met them with a devastating fire, followed by rifle-butts and bayonet thrusts. They feared the bayonet more than they did bullets.

General Harrison now took the initiative and sent an aide to Captain Ben Parke with

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orders to lead the dragoons in a charge on the enemy attacking our flank. Before Parke could obey, Major Sam Wells, commanding our flank, called on us to follow him afoot; and the line swarmed forward smartly. The enemy fell back, refusing to meet the bayonets. We soon had them on the run and then Parke's dragoons came pounding up and chased them out on the prairie. Because of the marshy nature of the ground the horsemen could not continue the pursuit, else they would have taken a very heavy red toll. As it was, the pressure was removed from our end of the camp, and for the first time since the fighting began we could straighten up and breathe freely.

Far out on the wet prairie in scattered groups were Shawnees, Kickapoos, Wyandots, Winnebagoes, Chippewas, Ottawas, Potawatomis, Sacs, and a few Miamis—all in a wild flight. On his low hill, east of the battlefield and removed from danger, was Tenskwatawa, the one-eyed Prophet, still chanting his medicine-song. And all the medicine ever made by red men could not restore the prestige he had lost there on that dark November morning; nor undo the mischief his ambition had worked on the schemes for a red empire entertained by Tecumseh, his twin brother. His army of more than a thousand brave warriors was in flight. Some of the tribesmen retreated past his position, and paused to berate him for leading them into a disaster. His power fell from him on that desperate morning and he was forced to flee to Wild Cat creek to find an asylum with some Wyandots.

Because of the red treachery, the army was impatient to march on Tippecanoe and destroy it. But we had a hundred and eighty-eight in killed and wounded, some of the latter being mortally hurt, and the town could not run away. Fifty of our men had died in the fighting, or soon thereafter. I suddenly realized I was free to look for Joel. All the excitement and battle-lust left me as I hurried through the camp, staring wildly at the groups of laughing, cheering men. I knew if he lived he would be searching for me.

All the confusion of a victorious camp came to me dully. Drums were beating, men were exulting, the wounded were groaning and only the dead were indifferent. As I came to a silent row my heart seemed to cease beating as I scanned each untroubled face. Then there was Joel, on his feet, and slowly coming in my direction, his haggard face showing as he slowly swung his head from side to side, looking for me. So slowly did he move I first feared he was desperately wounded. Then I discovered he was pausing to examine the hurt and dead. In my great joy at beholding him alive I failed to notice until almost upon him that he was carrying a long sword.

"Are you all right, Joel? I'm unhurt," I cried.

He nodded; and held up the sword.

"His sword? Bully McGin's?"

He nodded his head slowly and in a choked voice managed to explain:

"Killed right after the light come. Quit the line to spear a savage. My God! What'll become of the little girl?"

He led me to where Bully McGin, superadventurer, was resting, his earthly faring finished. The strong face was calm and inscrutable. The strong arms were folded over the deep chest. He had been shot through the breast, and as the Indians chewed their bullets, the wound was terrible. We arranged to take the body back to Kentucky. Once more Bully McGin would be back on the river and for all time.

General Harrison ordered all baggage to be destroyed to provide wagons and horses for the wounded, and he was the first to throw his camp furniture into the fire. That day was spent in fortifying the camp and in preparing the wounded for the return journey. Twenty-two wagons were provided for those unable to ride a horse. We had no food that day except horseflesh, and throughout the dreary hours Joel and I were thinking of the little red-headed girl down in Louisville, and picturing her grief.

On the following day the army marched to Tippecanoe and found it deserted. It was burned and the crops were burned and the brass kettles were destroyed. The only living thing in the town was an Indian with a broken leg. His hurt was treated and he was not harmed, although there were some who gladly would have shot him. From him we learned that a runner brought word, before the Indians gave up the fight, that Tecumseh was on his way home. And what a home-coming for the great leader! What a let-down for his lofty ambitions! But for two men the saddest part of the campaign was the death of Bully McGin.

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WHEN we had made the crossing and were on the Kentucky shore I told Joel he must carry the sad news, as it was beyond me. In his unselfish heart there had never been a thought as to who should perform the distressing duty. While he carried the long sword to the McGin house young Knolton and I went to a tavern. Word of the captain's death had arrived ahead of us, however, as we quickly learned as we entered the tavern. I waited some time for Joel to return and then went to our lodgings.

He came in quietly and at once announced:

"She'd already heard. When she faced me at the door I prayed I might never see another woman's face so filled with sorrow. She snatched the sword from me and cried:

" 'No need to ask how my father died.'

" 'Like the gallant gentleman and soldier he always was,' I told her, Jeffy. And quick as a flash she cried:

" 'He died as he always had lived—like Bully McGin. God always bless him for the best of fathers!'

"Then she was running upstairs with the sword in her arms. I waited till I could have a talk with Margy. We'll have to be here some time."

"We must stay, of course, as long as we can be of any help to Polly."

"That, of course. But it's Bully's affairs. Margy seems to think they're tangled up a bit and that we can straighten them out. The girl has no notion about his affairs."

Then he talked at some length concerning what Margy had revealed, and we were one in deciding what would be best to do.

CHAPTER IX

THE GREAT CRIME

AFTER three days of seclusion Polly McGin sent for us. Her first words were—"Never mention my father unless I do."

Poor child! In the next breath she was talking about him, recounting his kindness, their inseparable companionship, and concluded with weeping. The tears relaxed the strain a bit and did her good. Then she told Joel:

"He was a good father and a brave man. Joel, you must take his place. There's none else I'll turn to." This was much to our liking, as Joel from the day of McGin's death had considered himself in duty bound to look after the girl.

Early in 1812 the aged King of England was declared to be incurably insane and the Prince of Wales became the actual sovereign of Great Britain. Impressment of our sailors and the halting and searching of our ships had created a strong war party in our Congress. It was freely declared that President Madison showed timidity in resenting the affronts showered upon us. The whole country realized the momentous nature of the times; but few of those who blamed the President took into account the make-up of his Cabinet. Secretary of the Treasury Gallatin was strongly opposed to war. Secretaries Eustis and Hamilton, of the War and Navy, respectively, knew but little about military or naval affairs. The Secretary of State, Mr. Monroe, had had military experience during the Revolution. The Presidents, conscious of his inability to cope with the climaxes bound to be engendered by war and distracted by the hauling and pulling of his Cabinet, might well feel timid.

Great Britain had her work cut out for her in her struggle with Napoleon. When Russia defied the Corsican she was applauded and named an ally by Great Britain. Tremendous events were sweeping across the European continent.

Through the winter and spring Congress debated and disputed over the proposed declaration of war. Public meetings urging such a declaration were held in many places. The fact that we had no army, no navy, and but few military stores, dulled the tumultuous insistence of the war party not at all. By June the whole country was boiling with excitement. Mr. Calhoun's bill, declaring war against Great Britain, became the target of various proposed amendments. Mr. McKee, of Kentucky, secured ten votes for his amendment to include France in the declaration. While the amendment was lost, we in Kentucky believed it showed rare sportsmanship. Joel, a peace-lover by nature, stoutly insisted we should include any and every nation that had insulted us. Mr. Randolph urged all action be postponed until October. All these propositions were rejected.

The bill went to the Senate for twelve days' discussion. The Massachusetts Leg-

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islature submitted a memorial against the war. Speaking for the merchants of New York, John Jacob Astor urged that restrictive measures were preferable to war. If possible the excitement throughout the country was intensified.

The bill passed the Senate on June 17th, the anniversary of Bunker Hill, by a vote of nineteen to thirteen. On the following day it was received back by the House and the amendments were concurred upon. At three o'clock of that very afternoon it received the signature of the President. The South and West had committed us to a war that the East and North would have avoided.

On June 24th Napoleon led his great army across the Niemen, despite the third of a million Russians attempting to block his way, and he marched victoriously toward Moscow. Nearly a hundred thousand in killed and wounded marked the battle of Norodino. This was a grim business for a young and unprepared republic to consider on the eve of actual conflict. Joel satisfied me when he said:

"Getting killed ain't any disgrace. It's living, and being put-upon that hurts. Better death for the whole country than to lose our self-respect."

That was our idea. Almost always a coward can save his hide by running away.

General Hull's army was slowly moving toward Detroit before war was declared. When once I knew the United States meant business I overhauled my rifle and shifted to my hunting clothes. Wearing my fringed hunting-shirt I hastened to the McGin house, where Joel spent almost all his time when not piloting at the Falls. Margy admitted me, as the household was now more economically conducted under Joel's directions.

She darted one glance at my stained attire, and another at my rifle, and exclaimed—"You're going, Jeffry?"

"Of course. Where's Joel? Where's Polly? Where's Greenberry?"

"On the river. In her room. Down cellar," she wearily replied.

"I'll say good-by here, and look for Joel on the river."

She went upstairs and very soon Polly came running down. Her face was pale, and I knew she was thinking of the time her father had left her to go warring north of the river. She was composed, however, and did not urge me to stay. Giving me her hand she quietly said:

"You're a fighting man, Jeffry. Such as my father loved. I know how you will carry yourself. How you will die, if necessary. I shall pray that you have as good a chance as the others. But see that you fight ferociously, and take great care not to run any foolish risks."

Before I could frame a suitable reply she snatched her hand away and was running up the stairs. I heard a door slam.

"These times are mighty hard on her," Margy hoarsely whispered. "Always fightings and killings! Why must it be?"

"So that England, and all other nations, will understand we're done with being kicked about," I was explaining when Greenberry Spiller entered.

He brought the aroma of whisky with him and a rare benevolence of countenance.

"You are living, young friend, in the land of milk and honey—" he began. Then he paused and ran his fingers through his white beard and stared at my fringed hunting-shirt, and at the rifle leaning against the wall. Lowering his voice he continued, "More of these —— killings, I take it. Why can't you stay at home and work? Make salt! Now salt is the savor—"

"I'm in a hurry, Greenberry. The soldiers may need some whisky. Don't try to drink all of it." And I seized his limp hand, said good-by to the weeping Margy and ran from the house.

At the creek I met Joel on his way to the house.

His kind face looked almost gray as he noted my forest dress. He quickly began:

"Well, Jeffy, you're leaving us for the fighting. If you could stay and I could go!"

"You're place is here. You've taken her father's place. You are first with her now. You're needed here. I'm not."

"And I'm proud of her dear love. But you're my boy, Jeffy. I— Good-by. Good hunting. Come back safe and sound." And he well near cracked my ribs with one mighty squeeze of his stout arm, and hastened away up the street.

TO BE CONTINUED

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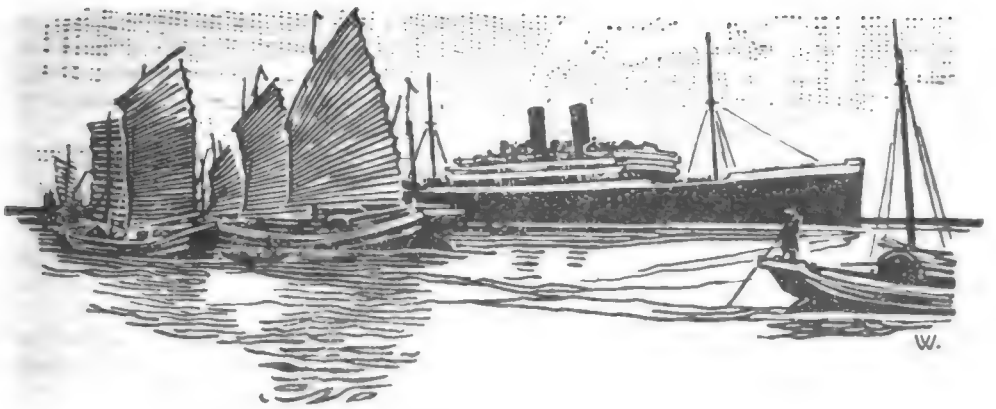

A CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK

by Charles Victor Fischer

Author of "Cash Jack," "Direct Disobedience," etc.

"DUKE" WHITE, a radioman on the big Navy tug *Minneha*, exploded a bomb that afternoon when, standing in the doorway of the mess hall, he read aloud to the crew a message he had just copied from Cavite in the Philippines. In Duke's young life regulations meant very little. He usually gave the crew all the official radio dope before handing it to the skipper. The message ran:

U.S.S. Minneha, Shanghai, China;
Boatswain Basset commanding:

Ensign George W. Reynolds has been detached from duty on receiving-ship *San Francisco* and assigned to command of *Minneha*.

—Bureau of Navigation.

Duke read it and then waited. The twenty jaws at the long table stopped moving up and down. No one said anything, but there were glad looks in all eyes; for thrills were rare on the *Minneha*. They looked at one another for a few moments. Finally all eyes riveted on Jack Rockwell, an old chief boatswain's mate—so old, in fact, and furrowed and hardened in the service that he was supposed to know everybody in it.

Jack acknowledged the general inquiry directed at him with a grunt.

"Reynolds, Reynolds," he repeated reflectively.

Then his weathered old face brightened and recognition dawned in his eyes.

"Oh sure!" he exclaimed. "George W., did you say?"

Duke, in the doorway, nodded.

"That's old "Rummy" Reynolds, then," Jack averred.

He turned to another old-timer at the table:

"You remember old Rummy! George W.—that's him."

"Rummy!" The other grinned at him. "You're off, Jack, 'way off. Old Rummy Reynolds was retired as a boatswain years ago."

"Same name and initials," Jack held on.

"And this Reynolds is an ensign," the other persevered.

"Which signifies nothing," interposed "Highflown" Bunts, a yeoman, the *Minneha's* ship's writer, lawyer, general adviser, and an authority on everything. "Your old Rummy Reynolds might have been retired as a boatswain years ago, and then come back during the war and got promoted to ensign. Lots of old ensigns in the Navy today. The point is, what kind of a bird is he?"

"Who, Rummy Reynolds? They don't make 'em any better," Jack Rockwell declared, and was seconded by an emphatic nod from the other old-timer.

This was like a cool breeze to men in Hades. In fact, for the past three months since the death of their former commanding officer, this handful of bluejackets had lived

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very much as live denizens of that limbo.

Like most sea-going tugs, the *Minneha's* complement called for two officers. She rated an ensign as commanding officer, and a boatswain as executive officer. It was this latter, her executive officer, who, since the death of her former skipper, had been making things so warm for the crew.

On the books he was Boatswain Basset. To that crew he was "Lep"—short for "Leopard."

They don't come any meaner than Lep Basset. He was a man driver. Regardless of the fact that he had once been an enlisted man himself, he considered enlisted men as so many cattle or beasts of burden, and would have driven them as brutes drive cattle and beasts of burden, with whip and club, could he have gotten away with it. He came very near to doing that as it was.

Lep was a genius at finding unnecessary work for his crew. They never rested. When everything was done, they began all over. And they did everything on the jump.

Lep doted on seeing men jump. A favorite trick of his was to sneak up behind a man and roar a command in his ear—just to see him jump.

And how he could sneak! No cat was more soft-footed. Which was why he had drawn the nickname "Lep." Day and night he moved about that ship on the balls of his feet; he was everywhere, always listening, watching, losing out on nothing.

Knowing this, Duke White, standing in the mess-hall doorway holding the message, should have looked before he spoke. Duke was not a cautious young tar.

"Now Lep gets kicked out of the cabin and shoved back in his stateroom," Duke laughed, flourishing the message. "Wonder what the new skipper'll say when he hears how Lep's been bringin' a gang of tinhorns aboard after midnight three nights a week, and then breakin' us all out of our sleep with general quarters, just to show his tribe of degenerates how he can make us hop around. It'll be more fun than a barrel of baboons to see—"

He stopped.

At Duke's shoulder was that face. Not only was Lep as sneaky as a cat, but he looked like one. His whole vicious and sneaky nature showed in his face, with its lines of hate, its small cunning black eyes, its sneering mouth. A broken nose, a reminder of his younger day's prize-ring ambition, lent to the artistic effect of the whole, and one cauliflower ear added the finishing touch.

"Blowin' your horn again, eh?" he sneered.

Then he growled—

"Where do you get your authority to broadcast my official communication to the crew before bringin' it to me?"

He snatched the message, gave Duke a murderous scowl, then turned and walked aft to his cabin. At the door he turned and bawled forward:

"You come back here, White! Send Bunts, too!"

WITH a growl at being called away from his dinner, Highflown Bunts pushed back from the table and followed Duke aft along the passageway to the cabin.

"Keep to —— out of here!" Lep growled at Duke, as he was about to enter.

Then to Highflown—

"All right, Bunts, you come in."

Highflown entered. Duke stood outside the door facing Lep. It was manifest to Duke that this was to be a pig-sticking affair, with himself as the pig.

"Anything to say for yourself?" Lep began.

"What's the charge, sir?" Duke returned.

"*Charges*," Lep corrected, and then proceeded to enumerate: "Mopery; bein' too —— smart; neglect of duty; slowness in carryin' out orders; disrespect to commanding officer—"

"Why not make it straight murder, sir?" Duke quipped in.

"That's another one," Lep said in an aside to Highflown, who stood beside him, notebook in hand, writing all this down in shorthand—"insolence."

Then to Duke he repeated—

"Anything to say?"

Duke only grinned at him.

"Put him on the restricted list," Lep said to Highflown. "No shore liberty till he works off five hundred hours extra duty."

He turned and said to Duke:

"Understand? Five hundred hours extra duty. Only for the fact that you're the only radioman aboard and your services are needed, I'd lock you up for a five-day stretch of solitary confinement. I'd hand

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you a five-day stretch for each charge against you. As it is, you'll stand your watches as usual. When you're off watch you'll turn to at chippin', scrapin' and red-leadin' the double bottoms till your five hundred hours are worked off. Beat it!"

HIGHFLOWN would have followed Duke forward, but Lep halted him.

"About this new skipper," Lep began. "Tell that gang of useless idiots up forward not to let their glad feelings run away with them."

He paused, eyeing his writer shrewdly. Highflown's finely made face told him nothing. The yeoman kept his eyes on the notebook in his left hand, in which he continued to scribble.

"Understand?"

"Yes, sir—ah, that is, no, sir."

"Well, just this," Lep growled. "If they're bankin' on this new skipper, Ensign Reynolds, changin' things when he comes aboard, they're gonna get it in the neck. That's all. That's enough."

Not for Highflown Bunts was that enough. He had drawn a whiff of Lep's breath, and it smelled unmistakably of the stuff that makes men boast, and that also makes them easy meat for clearer intellects. He smiled and observed—

"Then you know Ensign Reynolds, sir?"

Lep eyed him darkly for a moment.

"Yes, I know him," he growled. "I know all about Rummy Reynolds. And he ain't gonna come aboard this ship and mess up my routine—regardless of seniority. Understand?"

Highflown didn't understand, but he smiled and nodded sagely. He knew how to handle Lep—or rather, how to play him. There was a dark hint of something below the surface in Lep's remarks concerning the coming commanding officer; and Highflown was determined to sniff it out. He closed his notebook.

"I understand Ensign Reynolds is rather old, sir."

"About sixty," Lep answered absently. "Say, Bunts," he added as an afterthought, "never mind tellin' that gang of idiots up forward what I said. Just drop it."

Again Highflown nodded sagely.

To no other gob on the *Minneha* would Lep have condescended to say so much. Highflown was, in fact, the one man in his crew whom Lep treated as a human being. But this was out of expediency rather than affection. Lep was incapable of affection. Highflown owed his prestige to his predominant ability to dash off "highfalutin'" letters. Himself, Lep couldn't write an official letter in straight English. He had to depend upon Highflown.

Thus Highflown held the delicate position of skipper's right-hand man, a position in which he was able to play the rôle of silent go-between, a rôle which he played to the benefit of his shipmates.

JUST what it was that Lep "had on" old Rummy Reynolds, Highflown was unable to inveigle him into divulging. He worked every art and wile in his fertile mind, but to no avail. Lep did, however, in anything but ambiguous terms state that he did have something on old Rummy; that he knew something concerning Rummy's past, which, if he, Lep, elected to make known, would put the old ensign where he would never draw another dollar from Uncle Sam—in fact would never be placed back on the retired list, but "kicked out" of the Navy. So much and no more could Highflown extract from Lep.

"Don't air that," was Lep's final injunction. "Drop it."

Which injunction Highflown obeyed. He dropped it broadcast among his shipmates.

"But where are we now?" they asked one another. "What good does it do us to know that?"

Some were for informing the new skipper, upon his arrival, of Lep's brag. But the wiser heads shook nay, pointing out that such a course would only force Lep's hand and thus precipitate the old officer's downfall, if Lep really did have something on him. There was nothing to do but keep quiet about it; and quiet they kept.

But it was discouraging. There seemed little hope for any betterment of conditions now. For if Lep really did have old Rummy by the scruff, so to speak, then Rummy would be captain only nominally, a mere figurehead, and the *Minneha* would continue to be the madhouse she had been for the past three weary months.

A few days later a message came through stating that Ensign Reynolds was en route from San Francisco for Shanghai in the

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Empress of Asia, and would assume command within two weeks.

Lep sneered when Duke White handed him the message. But later he grinned and growled to Highflown:

"Assume ——. I want to see him come aboard this ship and assume command. I'm stayin' in command."

DAYS passed. Conditions grew no worse for the *Minneha's* gobs for the reason that Lep couldn't have made them any worse had he tried. It was work from sunrise to sunset. Then he allowed half his crew to go ashore. For those remaining aboard there were a few drills in the evening. Then they might have all night in their bunks—unless Lep happened to bring a party of friends aboard, in which event the crew might well expect to be broken out for a little midnight fun in the form of collision or fire drill, or mayhap general quarters. Such was Lep's idea of entertaining his friends.

Duke White got it going and coming. A gob with five hundred hours' extra duty to work off, on a tug, where the skipper can easily watch all hands, is in a vexatious position. His shipmates could at least go ashore every other night and forget themselves for a few hours, in the glass. Not so Duke. Being the only radio operator aboard, Duke had a schedule to work by. He was required to listen in at certain prescribed hours. Lep knew those hours. And as soon as Duke had performed his little trick at the radio desk, there was no tarrying. Lep was right on his neck to see that he got busy with a wire-scraper, chipping-hammer or paint brush; or perhaps he would have Duke down in his cabin, shining bright work, or cleaning up the mess his tribe of carousers had left there the night before.

Lep went even farther than that. One morning nearing dawn, when he had a hilarious party aboard, men and women, he had Duke roused out of his bunk and summoned aft. Then he ordered him to get busy as bandmaster, that is, play the phonograph.

"That'll be an easy way for you to work off some of your extra duty," he told Duke.

In this Lep was overstepping himself, Duke knew. But he could do nothing. Had there been another naval vessel present, he might have made appeal to a higher authority; but the entire Asiatic Fleet was in the Philippines. To refuse would have drawn him one of two charges; "direct disobedience" or "refusing duty," either of which is a general court martial offense. The Navy tells its enlisted man he must "obey first and question afterward." Duke knew he could beat either charge; but he didn't want either of those charges on his record. Besides, he had other plans. So he got busy as bandmaster, and held the job till reveille, when the party broke up. Then Lep turned him to cleaning up the cabin and quarter-deck.

SO IT WENT, till the day the queenly *Empress of Asia* came majestically up the Yangtze, with a mob of coolies in houseboats and sampans swarming in her wake and with the voracious quickness of seagulls gobbling up the garbage thrown overboard. It was about noon when she came up abreast of the *Minneha*. Every man on the tug lined the port rail and watched the big liner anchor—every man save one.

Duke White was the exception. While from the port rail his shipmates were watching the *Empress of Asia* anchor, from the starboard rail Duke hailed a coolie sampan alongside. After piling his bag, hammock and ditty-box into the sampan, Duke piled himself in.

"Siggey Shanghai!" he fired at the coolie, and helped him to shove off.

And while the coolie with his long sweep-oar plied the clumsy craft shoreward, Duke delved into his bag and brought forth his liberty blues, into which he proceeded to shift.

Having shifted, Duke lay down in the bottom of the boat. He kept barking "Siggey!" at the coolie—but there is no way of speeding up a coolie. Duke felt the urge to push him overboard and take the sweep-oar himself; but on second thought decided not to. A gob in full liberty regalia, plying a sampan toward Shanghai would have quickly drawn the eye of Lep. And it would take only a few seconds to get the *Minneha's* motor-boat underway and in pursuit.

Curiosity overrode caution after a few minutes, and Duke chanced raising his head above the gunwale for a look back at the *Minneha*. He was sorry he did. For, unless his eyes were playing him false, in that quick glance astern he had seen Lep, back

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on the quarter-deck, training a long-glass on this very sampan. Duke pulled up one leg and took his roll of money out of his sock.

"Hey, you looksee!"

He shook his money at the coolie. The black almond eyes blinked and blazed.

"I makee two piecee money, you siggey Shanghai!"

The coolie's pig-like grunts grew louder, and he threw a pretty good bluff at putting forth greater effort; but Duke knew that the sampan wasn't moving through the water any faster. He tried a more convincing method.

"Hey, you looksee!" This time Duke shook his fist. "You siggey Shanghai, or I'll knock your block off!"

The sputtering of a motor-boat's engine now broke on Duke's ears. He lay there in the bottom of the boat stiff as a corpse, listening, not daring to raise his head above the gunwale. The noise grew louder and louder. It rose to a roar. Duke sagged like a wet rag. The game was lost. It was all off. He rolled over on his belly, so that he wouldn't see Lep's face when the launch overtook the sampan. Then with a rush, the roaring engine passed. The sampan pitched and tossed.

Duke sat up, oozing gallons of sweat. It wasn't the *Mimeha's* boat at all, but one of the *Empress of Asia's* launches, conveying tourists ashore. Duke breathed again. Then he laughed as, looking astern, he noted that the *Mimeha's* launch was still moored alongside.

Nothing further worried him after that. In a few minutes his sampan was alongside the wharf. There he engaged two rickshaws, one to convey his bag, hammock and ditty-box, and the other to convey himself. In fifteen minutes he was safe and secure in a hotel room in Shanghai.

DUKE WHITE had had enough of the *Mimeha*. He could see no use in remaining on a ship under such conditions; therefore he was just going.

Duke was not deserting—you should know. Nothing was more remote from his thoughts than backing out of his agreement with Uncle Sam. He had signed and sworn to serve four years in the Navy, and serve them he would—but not under Lep Basset. Desert the flag? Not Duke; he wasn't of that sort of stuff. But jump ship, or take "French leave"—with the understanding that he would draw a summary court martial and lose three months' pay—that was different.

In a word, Duke was transferring himself. His next contemplated port of call was the receiving-ship at San Francisco. He had the price of a ticket back in the *Empress of Asia*, and back he was going. He would report in at San Francisco, stating flatly that he had grown tired of the Asiatics and transferred himself. Then let them do as they pleased with him—cut off his ears, chop him in half, gouge out his eyes— But he had a confident feeling that they would do no worse than fine him three months' pay; and he was willing to pay that much to get away from Lep Basset.

Late that afternoon Duke sallied forth from his hotel room. For one thing, he wanted to book passage for San Francisco in the *Empress of Asia*. Also, not having been ashore in over two weeks, he had a terrific thirst. There was scarcely any danger of running foul of Lep, he thought, because Lep would have his hands full aboard receiving the new commanding officer and turning over all the details and data.

On the flip of a coin Duke decided to slake his thirst first, and arrange for passage to San Francisco later. The café he entered was one of those long, narrow bars with deep-cushioned booths along one side. It was run by an Englishman. Everything was clean, polished and glittering. Two white-clad men were behind the bar. A dozen or so of patrons, mostly Europeans, were there; some lounging in the booths, others standing at the bar.

Duke strolled up to the bar and stood beside a tall, slim man, a man who appeared about thirty and was dressed in a light-colored suit and a Panama hat. Some tourist or newspaper man, Duke adjudged, and would have taken no further notice of him but for the fact that the man bent a keen, scrutinizing look on him. He was dark, had brown eyes and hair, and prominent features. It was not a handsome face; but when he smiled Duke couldn't help saying—

"Have something?"

"Let me do it, sailor," the stranger countered.

"Shanghai is no place for Americans to be arguin', mister," Duke said with a grin. "I'll take a ginger-ale high-ball."

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The stranger smiled faintly.

"That's more than they're able to say in 'Frisco nowadays," he said in a low tone, "That is, out loud." Then to the bartender he said, "Just plain ginger-ale for me."

"That don't sound as if it bothered you much," Duke observed.

The other shook his head. There was something clean and wholesome about him; and also, despite his slimness, a suggestion of strength, latent force and energy. He had the clear eyes and tight-drawn skin of a trained athlete.

"I never touch it," he said in that same low tone. "Used to. Found out I'm better off without it."

Duke was already commencing to feel the magnetism of the man. But he was wary. For, once before, over in Yokohama, just such a clean, cultured gentleman as this had wormed his way into Duke's affections and had magnetized his roll away from him.

The bartender brought the drinks. The stranger sipped his ginger-ale. Duke guzzled down his high-ball at a quaff, partly because he was thirsty and partly because in the matter of buying drinks he liked not to be a lap behind. He called for another drink. Then to his new found friend—

"Just come from 'Frisco?"

"In the *Empress*."

"Oh, yeah? Well, say—didn't she bring a naval officer out, a bird named Reynolds, an ensign?"

"Why, yes," the stranger answered. "He came out to take command of that American naval tug out on the river." He paused, looking at the *U. S. S. MINNEHA* on Duke's hatband. "Your ship, eh?"

Duke tossed off his second high-ball, and called for another.

"No, mister; she ain't my ship any more. I'm headin' back to 'Frisco."

"Oh, you've finished your service."

"Nope. Got eighteen months more to do."

"Just being transferred, eh?"

"Well, not exactly," Duke grinned. "I'm transferrin' myself."

The stranger eyed him keenly for a moment.

"But can you do that in the naval service?"

"I'm doin' it. Say, Jazbo," Duke broke off to the bartender, "give us a pack of Fatty-Mas."

"You mean you're going to do it, consequences be ——," smiled the stranger. "Is that it?"

"Now you got me, mister. But say, what kind of bird is this fellow Reynolds?"

"Why—" the stranger hesitated, thoughtful—"I got along very nicely with him on the trip out."

"Hm-m," Duke grunted. "Well, all I got to say is, I feel sorry for him. What did he think about his new command?"

"Wel-l-l, he didn't say much. Seemed cheerful and happy enough."

"Ye-ah? Well, that old boy is due to get fooled, mister. Before he's on that tug twenty-four hours he's gonna find out he's sittin' on TNT."

This was sufficient to whet the stranger's appetite for more.

"Let's sit down in one of these booths," he suggested.

"Well—" Duke hesitated, looking at the clock. It was a quarter to six. "I started for the steamship office. But what the ——"

Those three high-balls Duke had under his shirt were commencing to stir the sentiment embodied in the last line of that famous "Cheer, cheer" song. He added—

"I can arrange all that tomorrow."

THEY sank back in the deep cuhions of a booth, the stranger with a cigar in his mouth facing the rear, Duke across the table from him with his fourth high-ball before him.

"Just what's the trouble out on that tug boat?" queried the stranger. "I'm interested, you see, because I like Ensign Reynolds."

"Just one man is the trouble," Duke growled. "Lep Basset."

The stranger waited, while Duke partook of a swig.

"Of course," Duke resumed, "you bein' a landlubber, you might not understand. You see, that tug rates two officers. She rates an ensign, a commissioned officer, as captain; and a bosun, a warrant officer, as executive officer. She had these up to about three months ago. Then our captain died, leavin' this Lep Basset in temporary command.

"Now, mister, if I was to tell you all the rotten stunts Lep Basset has pulled off since then, you and me would be sittin' here till about a week from next Tuesday. He's

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been makin' monkeys of us for three months."

"But why?"

"Because he's stinkin'er and rottener than a dead skunk!" Duke spat out, and, lifting his glass, quaffed down his fourth high-ball.

"But it seems to me that such a state of affairs would soon terminate when Ensign Reynolds takes command," said the civilian. "He struck me as being a fair-minded officer. I hardly think he'll tolerate such an executive officer for long."

"No?" Duke leaned over. By now his tongue was well oiled. "But here's the little hickey, mister— Lep Basset has got something *on* old 'Rummy' Reynolds."

"Rummy?"

"That's a nickname Ensign Reynolds had years ago when he was a boatswain. We've got two old-timers aboard that remember him."

Duke broke off to shout for another drink.

"Yes, sir," he continued; "Lep Basset's got something on this fellow Reynolds. What it is we don't know. Reynolds might have been a repeater—that's a fellow that deserts and then ships over under a new name — years ago before they had the finger-print system. That's what we think it is; but of course that's only a guess. It might be something else. You see, mister, we've got a yeoman aboard. —— slick *hombre*. We call him 'Highflown,' 'cause he's got more words in his head than the dictionary. Anyhow, he gets all the skunk tricks from behind Lep's ears and passes 'em on to us."

And Duke rambled on, enumerating and elaborating each and every detail of life aboard the *Minneha* during the passed three months. He told of the work, work, work and the drill, drill, drill; of the poor food; of Lep's midnight parties when all hands had been broken out of their sleep to do monkey-tricks for the amusement of Lep's tribe. Now and then Duke paused in his narrative to moisten his tongue or to shout for another drink.

"You see, mister," he explained at the finish, "a gob's got no appeal. The Department won't consider a letter of complaint from an enlisted man unless the letter carries the signature of his commanding officer. So what's a man gonna do? How is he gonna register a kick against his commanding officer? And if we all got together and wrote a joint letter, they'd slate the whole gang of us for 'mutinous assemblage.' We got no appeal. That's why I'm transferrin' myself. When I get back to 'Frisco they can do as they —"

Duke stopped. For two seconds he sat staring toward the front door, which had just been opened. Then he shot back into the booth against the wall. For several seconds he sat huddled back there. The stranger watched him keenly. Finally Duke leaned over sideways and cautiously peered round the edge of the partition of the booth.

"Listen, mister," he whispered, straightening up. "Don't look now! The bird out near the front of the bar with the light felt hat and gray suit. That's Lep Basset."

The stranger had been sitting with his back toward the front. He now came over and sat on the outside of the seat occupied by Duke. Through puffs of cigar smoke he began studying Lep, who remained standing out near the front of the bar. As the lights were turned on, he noted the broken nose and cauliflower ear.

"Has that fellow ever been a fighter?" he asked Duke.

"Years ago, yes. They say he was pretty good, but didn't have any guts."

They sat there in silence, Duke crowding back against the wall where Lep couldn't see him, the stranger furtively watching Lep's movements.

"Something of a rum artist, eh?" he observed.

"What's he doin', lickin' 'em up?"

"He's dumped three straight whiskies," the other answered. "Here come a few of your shipmates," he broke off.

Duke leaned over for a quick glance toward the door. Jack Rockwell, Highflown Bunts and two seamen were entering. They filed passed Lep without noticing him and came to a halt at the bar abreast of the booth in which Duke sat with the civilian.

It was Highflown who spoiled Duke's game. Happening to turn, he saw Duke sitting there in the booth. He stepped over.

"Boy," he blurted out, "you'd better watch your step! Lep's ashore somewhere, on the war-path! He's goatier than a goat with a bellyache. He waited two hours for Rummy Reynolds to come aboard. Rummy didn't come. Then Lep sent me over to the

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Empress to find out if Rummy was aboard. They told me over there that Ensign Reynolds had gone ashore. When I came back and told Lep that he went red-eyed. Rave! Boy. He got about half cocked, and then went ashore. Watch your step, Duke. Keep your weather eye skinned and don't let him lamp you. I don't think he knows you sneaked ashore, because—"

"The —— he don't!"

Highflown leaped three feet, straight up, for the words were roared right in his ear.

For a long minute Lep stood there scowling from Duke to Highflown. He rocked slightly under the liquor he had drunk. His face was red and bloated, his eyes bleary. He was drunk. But it wasn't that blind, staggering, thick-tongued drunkenness. Lep's was that mad drunkenness that knows purpose and design.

"You think you're —— slick, eh?" he growled at Highflown. "I'll fix you for your back-bitin'."

Then to Duke—

"Come out here!"

The civilian at his side pushed Duke back.

"Sit still," he said.

"I say, come out here!" Lep roared.

"And I told him to sit still," replied the civilian without raising his voice.

Lep glowered down at him. The civilian sat there cool, calm, unperturbed. There was something in those smiling eyes that choked the growl in Lep's throat. He knew those eyes; he had seen them before, somewhere, sometime. They stirred his associative processes. But strive as he would he was unable to establish the connection in memory.

"Who the ——'re you?" he growled finally.

The civilian continued to smile.

"Try again, Mr. Basset," he said facetiously. "See if you can't remember me."

Lep only scowled. But the civilian had him guessing.

"You think you know me, you see something familiar in me; but you can't place me. Is that it?"

Lep's scowl gave way to a hangdog expression. He didn't answer. It was manifest to all present that the thin, clear-eyed civilian had him bluffed. Business had stopped. Tense silence reigned. All eyes and ears were centered on the tableau at the booth. The *Minneha's* bluejackets stood back against the bar, their mouths open and their eyes wide with expectancy. The civilian laughed.

"I'll tell you, Basset," he said. "What you recognize in me is nothing more than a resemblance I bear to my father. He was a bosun in the Navy, retired some years ago. He's dead now. I'm Boatswain Reynolds' son—Ensign Reynolds."

"Rummy's boy!" Jack Rockwell ejaculated.

The young officer darted him a quick look and smiled.

Lep Basset now had the look of a man condemned to be shot at sunrise. The bottom had dropped out of things; his whole cosmic scheme was in chaos. All his bragging about what he had on old Rummy Reynolds was now just so much wind. Rummy Reynolds was dead. The George Reynolds who now stood up and faced Lep Basset was a full commissioned ensign, a graduate of Annapolis. He drew a gallon of water to Lep's drop. He had Lep by the scruff.

He stepped out of the booth and faced Lep squarely. His smile was gone. His prominent features were contracted and there was fire in his brown eyes.

"Basset," he said, "the boasts you've been making about my dead father are worthy of a rat. But just for your own private information I don't mind telling you that my father's being a repeater twenty-five years ago is known to the Navy Department. He straightened that out shortly before he was retired."

He paused to let that sink in.

"A chip off the old block," Jack Rockwell muttered.

"If my father were alive and here at this moment there'd be a fight," Ensign Reynolds went on, "and you'd come out second best."

"I'll say so," Rockwell chimed in.

"According to certain standards," the *Minneha's* new captain continued, "I suppose I ought to sail in and knock —— out of you. It's naval law, etiquette, tradition, whatever you care to call it, that holds me back. I'm not squeamish about dirtying my hands on you. To pitch in and hand you yours with my fists would be following the path of least resistance. But I don't care to have my record soiled by barroom brawling, conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. You're not worth it."

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He turned to Rockwell and the two seamen. Pointing at Lep he commanded:

"Arrest him. Take him back aboard and lock him in his room."

Being senior, Rockwell officiated. He stepped up and placed a hand on Lep's shoulder.

"You're under arrest, sir," he said.

And as they marched Lep toward the front door, he flung back—

"A chip off the old block!"

Ensign Reynolds then said to Highflown: "Lad, you chase down to the wharf, get a sampan and go out to the *Empress of Asia*. Ask for Surgeon Dexter. He's a naval surgeon. Tell him that the commanding officer of the *Minneha* requests him to come aboard immediately. If he asks for a reason, tell him I have an intoxicated officer on board, and would like to have him pass on his condition."

"I take pleasure in carrying out that order, sir," stated Highflown, and went.

"Now, lad," the new skipper then said to Duke White, "how do you feel about going to 'Frisco?"

Duke grinned sheepishly.

"I ain't thinkin' about 'Frisco now, sir," he answered. "It wasn't the ship I had it in for, sir. I only wanted to get away from that bird. She's a good ship. She could be the best ship in the Asiatics, sir."

"All right," replied the captain. "Let's try to make her that. Go get your bag, hammock and ditty-box, and beat it back aboard."

GREAT ADVENTURES OF THE SUPER-MINDS -HUGO GROTIUS

By Post Sargent

HERE and there is found a prosaic being who places adventure and virile fiction in his private gallery of unworthies, together with Santa Claus, passed dividends, Cinderella and the duty to be joyous. To a certain type of mortal whose nose is rarely lifted from the grindstone of industrial humdrum or pedantic tedium, who takes economic life more grimly than the needs of life warrant—to him adventure is a social misdemeanor; a story of adventure an "old wives' tale."

Yet it is in part because of the verity of a time-worn adage—"truth is stranger than fiction"—that the humblest of us have swerved, or longed to swerve, for a thrilling moment, from the beaten path of our drab existence; that gifted authors are justified in providing for our enjoyment characters of their own creation in a setting drawn from their own imagination. It is in part because of this fact that a magazine is devoted *in toto* to the satisfaction of human craving for the exotic, to the liberation of the suppressed self that is in each of us.

For neither Captain Kidd, nor Marco Polo, nor Daniel Boone, nor Alexander Selkirk has any monopoly of the adventure-life that some affect to despise, yet secretly crave. Some of the great men of the ages, poised souls that have rocked human destiny by their intellectual might or thrilled us with their visions of placid beauty, have partaken of this spiced dish called adventure.

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Not those great men, I mean—the Raleighs, the Cromwells, the Columbuses—whose professionl careers connote vicissitude and action—but the equally great or greater, the men of "thought that moves mountains," the men of peace and reflection, whose souls demanded an hour of divine folly without which the spirit withers and dies.

"Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war." So, in placing before you tense moments in the lives of the relatively peaceful and the superlatively intellectual, you and I and friend So-and-So may conclude that adventure is an ever-present ingredient of the human complex, a silent partner of our workaday mood, a universal solvent of indurated spirits.

Of this constellation of intellectual immortals is Huig de Groot, better known to posterity as Hugo Grotius—the most eminent scholar, lawyer, theologian, diplomat and statesman of his age; far from ordinary poet and historian. So brilliant, indeed, that he was termed by his contemporaries the most learned man the world had known since Aristotle. So titanic a figure in the world of energized intellect, that in 1899, some two hundred and fifty years after his death, the United States honored Grotius and itself by placing a gold-and-silver wreath on his grave, at the peace conference called at the Hague by the Czar of Russia.

Picture to yourselves a child, later to be known as the father of international law, whose chief work was destined in the centuries to come to be of almost divine service to the cause of humanity—picture him as he played in the streets of the little Dutch town of Delft where he was born. Follow him as he passes his brilliant childhood under the tutelage of his learned father, who early impresses on him the importance of a balanced development and discipline of mind and body.

"A sound mind in a sound body" is one of the truest maxims devised for the guidance of those who would adventure seek in the realm of unmapped thought or parlieux wilds. Hence, one of the most striking qualities of this famous man was his life-long insistence on giving his body the supreme attention that would force the maximum yield from his brain.

Already poet and brilliant student at the University of Leiden at the age of eleven, Grotius passes almost overnight to complete intellectual maturity. At the ripe age of sixteen he is holding his own, as full-fledged lawyer, before the highest courts of his land, against the best jurists of the time. Latin poems, treatises on navigation and jurisprudence flow from his facile pen at an age when most of us are graduating from hop-scotch, marbles and tops.

Do you remember your first calf-love poem, when you mingled undying love with murdered English in honor of some ten-year old lass—was it Beatrice or Laura? With no great exultation I compare my own first effusion with the beautiful Latin poem of Grotius, when he was fourteen, celebrating the marriage of the great Henri IV of France with Marie de Medicis.

And it was at the ripe age of eighteen that the stripling was chosen by the United Provinces to write for posterity the history of the brave deeds and the dauntless courage of his native land. Attorney-General of Holland at the age of twenty-four, turn about prisoner in the jails of his own country, exile, diplomat, ambassador and prisoner again, his mind and pen never ceased to function until his death at the age of sixty-two.

And undoubtedly the greatest of his contributions to those dynamic volumes that belong to any two-foot shelf of books, is his "Concerning the Rights of War and Peace," that was the primer of every delegate to the Peace Conference at Versailles in 1919.

Reflective, scholarly, peace-loving, it was his lot to pass through an adventure as thrilling as any of Monte Cristo, or Ali Baba, or Haroun Al Raschid. Which brings us back to our opening paragraphs.

Some minute point of theology, too subtle for the understanding of your narrator, spread from the church to the public and threatened to disrupt the Netherlands. Grotius intervened as peacemaker. Almost immediately he found himself a prisoner and soon after condemned to life imprisonment in the fortress of Loevenstein. Grotius, whose fame as world genius was spread throughout Europe had now reached but his thirty-sixth year.

What a setting for the "mere writer of fiction!" And yet your narrator relates only the truthful facts.

A lonely, sea-gull-haunted spit of land not far from Rotterdam, where the Meuse and Waal rivers meet to pour their waters into

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the ocean. A grim castle whose beetling, moss-grown walls and clanking drawbridge had eight centuries before echoed to the battle-cries and rollicking shouts of their Norman lords, and had witnessed countless wild orgies and brutal forays, when Charlemagne was but just dead and France was being born!

WALLS, and double walls, and double moats; and chains, and reeking dungeons! And over all the pall of age and death! As formidable, as forbidding—or if you will insist that thrilling fiction is remote from life—as romantic and thrilling as any "Castle of Otranto" by Anne Radcliffe. And true!

And into the disembodied, spectral swarm of phantoms of ancient days—unransomed knights, ravished maidens, murdered serfs, unfrocked monks and soulless ruffians—was thrust the living form of the century's greatest genius—condemned to rot! Thirteen locked and guarded doors barred his return to the outside world.

For hope and solace in imprisonment Monte Cristo had his wise friend Faria; Voltaire his amusements; Cellini his intrigues; Galileo his experiments. Grotius was not denied the comfort of books and the company of a devoted wife.

It takes little imagination to vizualize this great man as he is depicted in an old print of the time. Leaving his table where he has been busy in study, in making translations of the great Greek tragedies and on an "Introduction to the Jurisprudence of Holland," he spends an hour or two each day "whipping the top," a salutary exercise for all good adventurers, victims like him of legal or religious intolerance.

And irony of human destiny! Calm of mind and with glowing body he returns to his table to finish another chapter of his famous "Truth of the Christian Religion." Beyond the six-foot-thick walls of his dungeon religious fanatics still demand his death in the name of that same much-abused faith.

A brave wife, books, a vigorous body, a super-intellect—of what value were they to set him free? Never, undoubtedly, did he learn of the concealed stairway in the wall of his room. Today the rare visitor to Loevenstein may view this secret staircase—one of two—and wonder why it was not revealed to Hugo Grotius. But useless knowledge! Even had he won to the bottom, beyond lay sentried courtyards, moats and massive walls. Beyond those, river and sea cut off escape.

The little town of Gorcum was distant less than two miles. Thither Madame de Groot was allowed to go twice a week to buy the family provisions out of the munificent allowance of forty-eight cents a day voted for their maintenance by the Dutch Parliament. Through Gorcum came the weekly box of books to feed the great man's mind. And when a spiteful judge one day alarmed his government with the accusation that Grotius had attempted to escape by means of ropes purchased by Madame de Groot, the latter was given an idea.

A stout box it was, four-feet long. Barely wide enough and deep enough for a man of a bit over average height to curl up in, if athletic and willing to warp his joints. So, for hours at a time the Father of International Law would practise lying inert in this vital coffin, with an hour-glass by his head, until the sands had twice run down. And Madame de Groot would sit on the box and seal the air-spaces, in order to test as far as possible the conditions of actual use.

The box entered and left the castle each week under heavy guard. Each week the military commandant had opened and examined it, until a time came when he grew overconfident and indolent and ceased to take precautions.

True adventure lies in taking chances. Hugo Grotius was at heart an adventurer; beneath the calm, scholarly exterior was the dare-devil spirit of a Robin Hood, the intrepid knight-errantry of an Ivanhoe. Such an attempt at escape meant probable death in one of several forms: suffocation, drowning, freezing, or even starvation.

The simple preparations having been made, the faithful wife still hesitated to appoint the fateful day for the death, perhaps, of her dear husband. It is Grotius himself who tells us how it seemed to him that Heaven itself intervened to set the day. On a Sunday, the 21st of March, 1621, little Cornelia de Groot who, he believed, had no slightest inkling of their plans, suddenly cried:

"Mother dear, father must go tomorrow, no matter what the weather may be."

The skeptic may be right in believing that the child had overheard some incautious remark of her parents as they laid their secret

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plans. The devout will believe with Grotius that a guiding Providence had used the baby lips for oracle. But that same evening the commandant, ever spying and hateful towards his prisoner, was suddenly called to leave the castle.

Going to the commandant's wife, who was more favorably disposed because of favors received, Madame de Groot pretended great solicitude for her husband's health.

"I would like to send away my husband's case of books; he studies so much that he wears himself out, and I can stand it no longer."

And she presented the commandant's wife with some venison, a gift that day from some friends. The gift overcame any scruples that the soldier's wife may have had.

Now enter Elsje van Houwening, the young servant girl of the de Groots! Asked if she would see to the safe delivery of the box in Gorcum she did not hesitate, even when told that the police might take illegal vengeance on her if caught.

"Come what may, and notwithstanding, I shall risk it," she replied.

Early on the morning of the 22nd, Grotius squeezes himself into his box clothed in only a suit of light underwear. The box is then tightly locked. No space is there for cushions or other shock-absorbers. Just a book beneath his head and a bit of yarn under his twisted knees. His life henceforth depends upon his will and the ability of his magnificent body to resist suffocation, shock and the torture of cramped muscles.

Madame de Groot now rings the bell. A soldier unlocks the door and growls at her for disturbing him. In plain sight on a chair beside the bed are the shabby clothes of Grotius, who is doubtless asleep after a night spent at his writing.

"It was my intention," says Madame de Groot, "to accompany this case of books to Gorcum, but because of my ill health and the wind and snow today, I shall remain abed. My maid Elsje will take the box, if you will but call the guard."

A squad of soldiers tramp in to carry the box down stairs and to the wharf. Their corporal dutifully examines the case and finds no air-holes bored in it, no other means of ventilation save the lock. Satisfied he growls out an order. As the soldiers heave the chest from the ground one of them remarks:

"Strange that this chest should be so heavy! Perchance the heretic be within."

And Madame de Groot, though almost nauseated by the violence of her emotions, manages to reply laughingly from behind the curtains of the bed:

"It is heavy because it contains heretical books."

Followed by the maid, the box goes bumping and sliding through the dim corridors and down the stairs, passing one by one the thirteen doors. On four different occasions a weary or angry soldier declares that Grotius must surely be within the box. One soldier more brutal than the rest halts his comrades and announces:

"Faith! the cursed dissenter is inside! Hold here until I get a wimble and pierce a hole through him to let the guts run out!"

He makes to go in search of the instrument. The nimble-minded maid, inwardly terrified, replies with a laugh and a coy glance at the ruffian—

"To that end you will need a drill stretching from here to his bed."

The other soldiers laugh and the grumbler stands undecided. At this moment the commandant's wife appears and settles the dispute by ordering the case to be taken to the little ship that waits at the dock.

SOMETIMES lifted between several sweating, grumbling soldiers, sometimes tumbled end over end—smashing down with stunning force upon the cobbles of the yard—the box continues its slow journey and reaches the little vessel. Sleet and snow is falling and a veritable gale is raging, rocking the frail craft at its moorings. The captain, impatient at the delay, fumes and calls for more speed on the part of the porters, who stop to take a breath.

A light plank is run out to shore to serve as gangway. The box is pushed up the plank which begins to bend and crack beneath the weight. In a moment box and man will be precipitated into the swift-running water. Elsje takes command, and barely in time the precious cargo is pulled back to shore. Through all this commotion and rough handling not a movement, not a sound from the tortured prisoner!

When finally heavier planks are found and Elsje and her case have reached the deck in

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fety, the ship casts off. It seems that ow the danger is past. Such is not the ase. Acting by previous arrangement, the aid waves her handkerchief over her head hen the vessel is off-shore. Thus was Iadame de Groot to know that all had one well.

But a sailor who had remarked the signal rew the attention of the others to it. To heir suspicious inquiries she made answer hat she was merely having her little joke ith a fellow servant who had prophesied hat she would be seasick in such a storm nd on such a rough sea.

She herself in the account that she has eft after her tells of the fresh terrors that ame upon her when the boat heeled over efore the squall, and the box went crashing gainst the rail, wrenching it loose. Only fraction of a minute stretched between Grotius and eternity.

A moment later, an officer of the castle at down on the case, in such position as to ress the cover tighter and seal up the key-ole. And to his other tortures the illustri-us inmate could now add the agony caused by the rhythmic, pestle-like thumping of the officer's heels, as they beat a tattoo just where Hugo's head rested against the box.

"May I pray your honor to move?" said the faithful maid. "This box contains, among other precious things, several valuable dishes that may be damaged by the blows of your heels."

Suffocation, freezing cold, racked muscles, the nightmare journey from castle to boat, the giddy tossing of the little vessel with the imminent risk of seasickness! Yet during all this eternity of multiplied martyrdoms the iron will and iron body of the fugitive were as epically heroic as the sufferings depicted in one of the works of Grotius himself; a work that indirectly inspired our own Milton to sing the greatest adventure song in the English tongue.

A groan, a cough, the merest shifting of the body would have resulted in certain discovery.

The shore is reached at last. As the box is being wheeled to the home of a friend, the captain's boy suddenly halts and exclaims:

"Father, upon my soul, there is something alive in this box!"

A sudden jerk, a violent wrench had perhaps drawn a gasp from the over-tried breast of the suffering fugitive. More likely the dynamic power of Hugo's mind had established telepathic relations with the sensitive mind of the youth. But the maid was again equal to the occasion.

"Dost thou hear what the lad says?" asked the father. "He says there is something living in the box."

"Indeed, a shrewd wit hath the younker," she replied, "for good books, I have heard my master say, have both abundant life and eternal spirit."

The box being at length set down in the kitchen of the Daatselaers, the carriers paid and dismissed, Elsje and the friends of the de Groots had another moment of terror, when Grotius failed to respond to their calls.

"Master Groot!" called the maid. "Oh, Master Groot is indeed dead!"

But a thin, weak voice issued through the lock:

"No, I am not dead," it said. "I answered not, for I failed to recognize the tones of thy voice."

Meanwhile the commandant had returned to the castle and had been informed of the suspicions of the soldiers. Finding the prisoner flown, he dispatched a troop to Gorcum with orders to bring Grotius back dead or alive. The box was speedily traced to the Daatselaer house, but Hugo Grotius had shortly before started on the second lap of his race for life and liberty.

Picture him as he comes forth from his kitchen sanctuary, accompanied by a friendly mason who has been drafted into service to provide the proper disguise. With mason's tools in hand, his face and hands smeared with plaster, the learned man presents a sight to make one weep—or laugh. A coat that barely reaches to his waist; frayed trousers that fail to meet either ankles or coat; and shoes lop-heeled and covered with lime.

In this disguise, and with the pack in full cry behind, the masons finally induce a reluctant ferry-man to brave the storm and pilot them across the Merwede. Two hours are lost in this way. At last they win to the far off shore and the mason's helper starts on his long walk to Waalwyk, which is reached at dusk.

Weary, but indomitable, Grotius is heartened by finding a carriage awaiting him to carry him to Antwerp where sanctuary is assured. Delivered into the keeping

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of the driver, who is told that his passenger is a bankrupt fleeing from justice, the jehu is amazed that a financier should show such abysmal ignorance of the value of the coins that he possesses. Long unfamiliar with the fluctuating values of the gold and silver coins that varied between province and province, as between state and state; accustomed to leave to his wife the minor cares of the family exchequer, where the budget was balanced in terms of pennies; perhaps, also, with the fine indifference of the great scholar and economist, often "pound-wise and penny-foolish," Grotius finds difficulty in settling his score with the money in hand.

Stopping to purchase food, the driver confides to the mystified inn-keeper, as Grotius fumbles with his coins:

"Banker and bankrupt he may be! Myself, I deem him but a fool, for never had man less knowledge of good money."

The carriage rolls on all through the stormy night, with the soldiers from Loevenstein only a few leagues in the rear, and ever drawing nearer. Stopped by a detachment from a Spanish garrison who demand his passport, Grotius is saved from disaster by the sheriff of Antwerp, whom a kindly Providence sends along just then.

Recognizing the fugitive, he lends him a fast horse and a guide, and wishes him godspeed. And so, about midday of the 23rd of March, Grotius rides safely into Antwerp, after thirty-six sleepless hours.

Here we should leave the world's great friend to complete the rest of life's adventure. He has issued with distinction from the crucial test of his manhood, gloriously fitted by the harmonious union of intellect and body to receive the sword and spurs of knight and champion of humanity.

THOUGH the unhurried cadence of his writings and the measured flow of unembittered thought suggest untroubled calm, Grotius never more knew a life of peace.

Taking refuge in France where, for a time, he was welcomed by high and low because of his genius, accepted afterwards as the ambassador of Sweden, accredited to the "Court of the Most Christian King, Louis XIII," he was beset by political intrigues, religious persecutions and financial worries.

Good Mynheer Daatselaer of Gorcum, whose wife had aided him to escape, was able to convince the angry authorities that he had had no hand in the affair. In fact, the first act of Grotius, upon arriving at Antwerp, was to write a letter absolving Mynheer Daatselaer of all guilt. Thus these good people fade out of our picture, though not out of the pages of written history.

Madame de Groot was permitted to join her husband in Paris, where she continued to make thrifty use of the pennies, and to mend her husband's shabby clothes, the while he finished his "Rights of War and Peace" and "The Origin of the American People"; fighting constantly in the diplomatic arena for an enlightened world statesmanship.

Life exile from his own country, though an honored guest in all others, he died on the twenty-ninth of August, 1645, while traveling from Stockholm to Lübeck. Shipwrecked on the lonely coast of Pomerania during a violent tempest, he was claimed as a victim of pneumonia a few days later. Madame de Groot survived him by eight years, cared for by friends at The Hague, and dying with her husband's name on her lips.

And Elsje? Indeed, they did! They got married and lived happily ever after. A certain Willem van den Velden, faithful servant of Grotius and instructed by him in the elements of Latin and law, was admitted to practise in the courts of Holland. His first suit was for the hand of Elsje. A favorable verdict was returned. As the years were rounded out, some little van den Veldens appeared upon the streets of Delft, where the baby feet of Grotius had taken their first steps.

Madame Daatselaer had written a narrative of her share in the escape of Grotius. So Elsje, feeling that her great moment, her great adventure had been stolen from her, set herself to the literary task of leaving to posterity the account of how she had whisked her master out of the clutches of the law. Dig into the musty volumes of any Dutch library and you will find it still.

When Prince Maurice, Stadtholder of Holland and arch-enemy of Grotius, was informed of the latter's escape, he exclaimed—

"It was my thought that we could never hold him in prison, for he was wiser and greater than all his judges."

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SHERIFF JOE'S ENTERTAINMENT

By E. S. Pladwell

Author of "Keegan's Law and Order," "Doctor Sam McChesney," etc.

PEACE officers are always holding conventions, possibly because misery loves company and birds of a feather flock together; but the tenth annual convention of the Southwestern Peace Officers' Association threatened to be somewhat of a frost.

"It ain't the business sessions that's troublin' me," said the stout and bald-headed Sheriff Joe Kingman, of Yipaho County, Arizona, where the conclave was to open that morning. "It's the entertainment. We're not a big town like Los Angeles or even Yuma, and how in tarnation I'm goin' to entertain seventy-one delegates is more than I can figger out."

"Well," comforted a deputy, "you'll give 'em a big barbecue up at Yellow Butte Pavilion this noon. That's fifteen mile up the line. They can see the scenery."

"Yep, and then what?" groaned the sheriff. "There's a big dance tonight, and then for three more days I'll have nothin' to offer 'em."

"You can have the band on the Limited when it comes back from Yellow Butte this afternoon," suggested the deputy, brightly.

"Hrrh! One band, one barbecue, one train-ride and one dance, all in one day. How about tomorrow?"

The deputy became silent. The door opened and a messenger walked in with a note.

Streakaway, the black thoroughbred stallion at the Henry Hunt ranch missing from the pastures since last Tuesday. Value $20,000. Please investigate.

The sheriff's blue eyes studied the missive at some length; but the tramp of many boots outside apprised him that his seventy-one guests were arriving for the day's entertainment; so, with a sigh, he stuck the missive in his pocket, with the mystery unsolved.

IT WAS the egotism of "Louie the Snitch" which further muddled the mystery and added a few others.

Spawned in the gutters of New York, living his furtive life in the shadows, he earned his first title of "Flat Head Louie" because of his intellectual absences, and was accepted on an equality basis by the others of his bootleg-morphine-gunman set, until his unfortunate mental twists cajoled him into giving information to the police, which was almost a fatal lapse. Flat Head Louie's name changed swiftly to Louie the Snitch. And then he happened to work his automatic upon a prominent politician, which was very poor policy.

Desperate, with his affairs in a frightful tangle, with the police seeking him in the highways and his ex-pals searching for him in the byways, Louie decided to speed as far from wicked New York as the wheels of various railroads could take him.

Comes now the Transcontinental Limited, led by a fine black locomotive, pounding along the lonesome, single track in an Arizona valley full of sage brush, sand, alkali, and small hills which sometimes venture down near the track and sometimes do not.

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A white cloud leaped from the engine's upper works and a penetrating shriek advised the world that the train was about to halt at a long platform full of men, about a mile down the track, amid limestone hills. A building beyond the platform bore a red-and-white sign disclosing that this was Kinssley's Yellow Butte Pavilion, Barbecue Dinner $1.

In the second tourist sleeper behind the engine lounged Louie, with a brown golf cap on the back of his narrow head and a wad of chewing-gum agitating his slack and receding jaw. With a grateful sense of security, he lolled back in his rattan seat as the train slowed down, allowing his shifty brown eyes to gaze out of the window toward the drab scenery.

Right up to his car slid seventy-two husky officers of the law on a weather-beaten platform, each peering directly at the train, each puffing at a cigar, each wearing on his chest a gleaming badge of nickel, gold or platinum. Seventy-two, mind you!

There are no words colossal enough to describe the jolt, the shock, the horrifying, shattering impact which jarred the one-track brain of Louie when his ratty little eyes beheld the battery of badges. He took it personally. He knew the New York police had worried about him, so naturally these Arizona specimens must feel the same way.

For an instant he sat numb with paralysis, unable to move hand or foot. The next instant he moved both with such celerity that there was only a faint breeze through the aisles to tell of his passage.

An expert tracker could have found the footprints of his cloth-topped button shoes, racing past a water tank, up a bare gulch, over the summit, and around several knolls. Apparently there were no expert trackers among the badged fraternity, for Louie could see no sign of them when at last he halted and allowed his chalky and perspiring face to turn backward. The train was puffing loudly beyond the hills. There was nothing else to mar the silences. Louie's egotism came to fortify him against a growing sense of loneliness.

"Well, dey ain't got me!" he panted.

He started onward, walking swiftly, as yet unmindful of the hot sun. Down the valley—it looked like a mile or two—was a white ranch-house with trees and greenery around it, just past the gray-brown hills at his right. He decided to go there, so he hiked over sands and dry-washes, between clumps of green-gray sage-bushes or occasional cactus which looked like tree trunks, wondering presently why the ranch-house kept as far away as ever.

He took off his coat. He took off his vest, collar and necktie. Salty perspiration oozed down his cheeks. Thirst assailed him. He began to notice defects in his accouterments. From one standpoint he was splendidly well equipped, possessing three packs of cigarets, a book of naughty pictures, a hundred dollars, a hypodermic needle, a short leather blackjack, an automatic pistol, and a box of cartridges; but he found himself yearning for other things, notably the water-cooler in the train. But no. That brought up thoughts of another sort of cooler.

"Nix," he insisted. "Dey ain't got me yet!"

He descended into a dry-wash, full of white sand which insisted on getting inside his cloth-top shoes. He emptied his footgear time and again, crying, bawling, yowling and swearing, until at last he returned to high ground and sat on a rock, staring in frantic bewilderment at the ranch-house which stood blandly at the end of the valley, just as far away as ever.

A blue-clad form on horseback bobbed beyond the nearby clumps of sage. Louie crouched low, watching with fervent intentness lest this be an officer of the law.

The rider came closer, a round-shouldered, unbarbered nondescript, with a ragged black hat flopping over a face so dark that Louie placed him as an Indian, having seen some of these strange people selling bows, arrows, rugs and pottery at the stations along the railroad. Reassured, he arose and yelled. The other swung toward him, halted, and looked him over.

A great observer of human traits once said that the swiftest thing in the world is a bride's unerring perception of another bride. If this be so, the second swiftest thing often is the mutual recognition of crook for crook. Louie and the Indian, across all the lines of race, color, custom and creed—if any—looked into each other's narrow faces and knew they were brethren.

"You ketchum water?" inquired Louie, trying to bridge the gap of language.

"Where do ya get that stuff?" demanded

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the Indian, passing out a canteen. "Think I'm a Chink?"

Louie's throat gurgled. The Indian's wicked black eyes looked him over, from his mean little rat face to the cuffed ends of his shoddy, yellow-gray trousers.

"Where ya goin'?" puzzled the Indian.

"Nowhere," answered Louie, truthfully.

"Where'd you come from?"

Louie's one-cylinder brain strove to recollect some of the stations he had passed through. Not New York, of course; anything but New York.

"El Paso," he ventured.

Indians rarely grin.

"Huh. You must be one of these here Texas Rangers I've heard about!"

"Sure," said Louie, anxious to please.

The Indian gathered up his reins.

"Where you goin'?" quavered Louie.

"Home."

"Where?"

The Indian—he happened to be the best traveled of his frowsy sub-tribe—pointed at a gap in wrinkled mountains across the valley.

"You go up this street three million blocks and then you turn to the left. Wanna come?"

"Sure," accepted Louie, with eager alacrity.

He was helped aboard the horse, where he sat painfully, holding the Indian's sweaty shoulder and jolting along for silent miles through hot gulches and hills where the sunset finally changed the land to a beautiful glowing red and then to a darker purple.

The horse turned at last into a little brushy valley and arrived at the upper end, at a gypsy camp of wagons, old flivvers, horses, blanket-tents, beef on the hoof, fat squaws, squalling brats, and men with dark faces and beady eyes, who did nothing in particular. The last faint rays of daylight allowed Louie to see the camp; and then it became a collection of dark blotches with occasional little lights gleaming.

The Indian dismounted in front of a long structure of blankets and boughs which looked like a pavilion but wasn't. Louie slid off the horse—his brain was numbed by the strange happenings and scenery of the day—and was led past a canvas flap and into a dirt-floored establishment where a dozen ominous dark faces stared at him in the light from a single candle whose grease decorated a rickety kitchen table.

Some instinct of self-preservation made Louie back against the yielding wall; but at this sign of mistrust his hosts came forward, jabbering to each other.

"Nix on de rough stuff, now!" yelped Louie, reaching toward his automatic.

Powerful hands clutched his arms. Several sets of fingers—they lacked the technique of pickpockets but substituted a slow thoroughness—brought forth the cigarets, money, blackjack, hypodermic, automatic, cartridges and pictures. The latter were torn up with hardly a glance. The rest of the stuff gleamed in brown hands.

It may have been that Louie was merely giving his contribution to the common funds before acceptance as a friend and a guest. It may have been that the camp was run on a Bolshevik-communal-utopian basis, where every person was equal and took whatever he could get; but Louie never waited to find out.

He dived under the wall—nobody seemed to care—and slipped past a maze of dark objects resembling tents, trees, flivvers and wagons, hastening as fast as his wobbling, thin legs could go; snarling maledictions, and gradually climbing into a land of thick trees until he brought up against a shed, felt his way to a wire fence, climbed it, walked upon muck, and laid his surprized hands upon a saddle and a bridle on the ground.

A soft noise nearby apprised him that a horse was present, and after some thought Louie was convinced that horse, saddle and bridle had something to do with his future. He took the hint.

The Indians were not greatly concerned over Louie's departure. They had his hundred dollars and there wasn't a horse or flivver in the outfit worth one-tenth of that sum, except for one fine black stallion, so beautifully hidden that even the brain of a Sherlock Holmes could hardly find the evidence of its whereabouts.

Louie, having no brain, had stumbled right up to it.

SHERIFF Joe Kingman was inclined to be peevish next morning. The annual dance of the Southwestern Peace Officers' Association had been a large and successful affair, lasting until three o'clock; but elderly sheriffs are not supple, and he found his intellect as logy as his creaking body.

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"What in tarnation am I goin' to entertain these galoots with now?" he wailed. "The barbecue's over, the dance is over, and we've got nothin' else except one bum movie house with a busted piano. Gosh, if we only had some scenery to drive 'em around in!"

But his mournful blue eyes, looking out of the window, observed no scenery worth mentioning.

A messenger appeared in the doorway, bearing an official looking missive.

Passenger disappeared from westbound limited near here yesterday. Ticket, New York to San Diego, bore name Louis O'Brien but name may be fictitious. Description, small man, looks like jockey, big ears, thin face, dark hair, age about 21. Left wicker suit case containing shirt with yellow and green stripes. No marks. Foul play suspected. Please investigate.

"Hrrh!" cogitated the sheriff. "Yeller and green shirt, foul play suspected. I wouldn't blame anybody much, at that!"

His eyes looked out of the window again. The message was not without enticement. He knew the futility of any such needle-in-the-haystack search, but it furnished a beautiful excuse to sneak away from the convention.

"It's my duty," he informed himself. "I'll have to let my deputies take care of the guests. Yep, conventions are all right, but duty comes first!"

Thereupon, with many apologies to various delegates who came across his path, he put in a pleasant but cowardly morning in his comfortable office.

LOUIE had started for nowhere in particular and seemed to have arrived there quite early. The rosy sunlight of dawn found him sitting painfully but stubbornly upon the back of a fine black stallion whose bridle was upside-down, gazing upon a lonely, flat valley full of alkali, bordered by bleak hills crossed with dozens of barren gulches.

"Dis," whimpered the weary Louie," is de bunk!"

He rode on because he couldn't do anything else. Occasionally he leaned forward and rested upon the animal's neck. Had the big black stallion been anything but a sweet-tempered playmate, far more gracious than the usual of his kind, Louie would have been lingering yet around the Indian corral some fifteen miles back, with most of his anatomy kicked apart. As it was, the animal suffered the mishandled bridle in silence, kept his beautiful head pointed in the general direction of his home ranch, and waited with grave courtesy during those frequent occasions when the yowling Louie happened to fall off.

Every bone in Louie's mean little body ached. New pains now developed with each mile. His eyes, once furtive and shifty were inclined to glare straight upward with the glassy agony of a person tortured on the rack. Savagely, whining with pain, snarling between set teeth, he jabbed his vengeful heels into the horse which was the innocent cause of his torture. Instantly a mile of sagebrush and two hills shot past him; but that was the only net result. With a low moan he persuaded the animal to walk again, bringing his joggled body closer to the saddle.

"Ya-a-a-a-a-a!" he screeched, with the frenzied exasperation of a lost soul.

The horse laid his velvet ears back and halted, pending more explicit directions. Louie slid to the ground. His face contorted with many demoniac expressions but his thick lips could only groan a few baffled words—

"Dis is de bunk!"

Had he been able to look ten miles up the valley behind him, he might have seen about eight Indians scurrying toward him as fast as their cheap horses could race; but Louie was past worrying about details like these. With his tongue between his teeth, he started limping on foot toward a road or trail which he noticed running along the shoulder of a bare hill just ahead.

Behind him walked the splendid black stallion, nudging Louie's shoulder with an affectionate playfulness so ironical that the cursing Louie longed for his automatic.

THE convention of the Southwestern Peace Officers' Association droned on in a little hall. Sheriff Joe Kingman held conference with the railroad officials at the station, taking plenty of time and asking lots of questions. Nobody learned anything.

THERE is an oasis in almost every desert. The moaning Louie, climbing over a bare little divide and letting the friendly stallion ramble along behind him, stumbled into a pleasant little valley of about twelve

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acres, covered by brush, willows, dry grass and cottonwood trees, all existing because of a little spring which trickled down from a small cañon.

Through the sunburnt foliage Louis noticed the board walls of a house and his feverish eyes blinked with joy. Indifferent concerning capture or anything else except a soft bed, he crashed through the shubbery and raised his voice as he came to a clearing in front of the tumbledown edifice.

Two bearded faces appeared in stark surprize at the doorway. Three burly men in overalls and cowhide boots came around the side of the house, registering consternation. The bearded faces at the doorway popped out of sight swiftly. Two rifle-barrels took their places.

"Nix!" screeched the despairing Louie. "Lay off, youse guys! I'm all in!"

The three big fellows stalked up to him and surrounded him.

"Whereja git that hoss?" demanded the blondest one, eyeing the upside-down bridle with special interest.

Louie looked into unkempt faces full of hair. He might have been overawed, except that they and their whole establishment had the easy aspect of a vacation camp. The rickety porch of the house and the grass in front of it were strewn with magazines, old newspapers, tin cans, empty cartridges and other miscellany which advertised a blissful existence.

"A guy gave'm to me," whined Louie, gazing with pathetic eagerness from face to face.

Then the bitterness of his bewildered little alien soul exploded in a mad appeal which relapsed into the vernacular of his gutter youth:

"Can de bunk, youse guys! Gimme a place to flop. Nemmine scoffin's. I ain't got nuttin'; dey cleaned me. I'm on de fritz! Gimme a place to flop and douse de glim, for de love o' Mike!"

There was an interval of silence. The blondest of the trio looked at the brunettest.

"If I hadn't heard it I wouldn't believe it," remarked the blond. "What is it?"

"Search me," said the brunette.

"Aw, can it!" whimpered Louie, with knees sagging from pain and weariness. "Gimme a bunk—I'm all in!"

The brunette gave Louie a close, deliberate inspection as the two others came up, bearing rifles.

"Who are you?" demanded the brunette. "How'd you come here? Speak up—talk United States! We don't allow people to butt in here, get me? You better explain yourself, stranger!"

Despite Louie's poignant aches and the spots and flashes which danced in front of his eyes, his narrow face contorted into a twisty grin, for he recognized these men as brethren. The rifles and the one trifling statement about their desire for seclusion confirmed the little bird in his brain which had been whispering the truth since first he had sighted them. He knew!

"Listen!" he appealed, looking from face to face, "I ain't no bull. I'm a square guy. Ask anybody. I ain't gonna squeal!"

"Where'd you git that hoss?" persisted the brunette, with the severity of a judge.

"Listen. I'll come clean, bo. I glommed dat skate off some Injun guys, see? Dey frisked me—"

His knees bent forward. His eyes shut and his receding chin buried itself under the folds of his dirty and sweat-wrinkled collar. Outraged nature demanded its toll. He pitched to the grass and lay quite unconscious.

The brunette standing over him, glanced down and then his eyes went to the upside-down bridle on the big, black stallion.

"Well," he decided, "we've got a fine hoss out of it, anyhow."

ONE of Sheriff Kingman's deputies induced a basso from the First Methodist Church choir to sing "Asleep on the Deep" for the delegates at the convention. The delegates applauded politely but the convention seemed to lack pep.

FROM over the hills beyond the little oasis of the five vacationists came the drumming of hoofs. The five, having tossed Louie into a cot in their shanty, stopped their ministrations, listened, looked at each other, and dived for their rifles and six-shooters.

Three abused ponies, dripping with perspiration, came over the nearest hilltop and started to race down it, bearing dark-faced persons in ragged overalls. The five sojourners clattered to their porch and stood alertly, which caused the three Indians to jerk back their animals and then dismount after a short palaver.

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"They're comin' down," said the brunette vacationist.

"They're not," contradicted the blond. "We're goin' up. Now they've tracked us here, do you think I'm goin' to give 'em the advantage of position? We'll meet 'em up there."

The five climbed up-hill. The nearest and biggest Indian greeted them with a casual wave of his brown hand and then pointed toward the house.

"You got black horse," he charged.

"Well, what of it?" retorted the blond. "Whose horse is it?"

"Mine."

"Yours? Ha-ha! Tell us another one!"

The Indian's wicked black eyes flickered and he shook a passionate fist in the white man's face.

"Mine!" he yelled. "My horse! White boy steal'm, we chase long way, you give'm back, see?"

The blond noticed other Indian reinforcements coming across the long bare valley, some near and some far away; but the black stallion was very valuable.

"How much you pay?" he inquired.

The Indian showed his teeth in a snarl of savage vexation. After all his labor in stealing the horse, after the heartbreaking job of sneaking it from its home pastures across half a county, his net result was this!

"Pay?" he howled. "Our horse—you steal—you ask pay? You crook?"

"Nope, business man. We can git a reward for that hoss if we work it right. The owners might hand out a nice little sum and no questions asked. I guess we'll keep it."

The Indian's voice broke out of control.

"No! No! Gimme horse! You crook, you ——, you gimme horse or I bust your —— head off!"

The blonde knocked him down.

A NESTER driving his motorcar along the rackety trail toward his far-away home ranch arrived at the little collection of hills some thirty minutes later. The popping of firearms advised him that trouble was brewing up ahead. Two nondescripts on ponies raced across the sky-line. Three others lurked behind rocks near the road, firing uphill.

A stray bullet whipped past the motorist, who was still around the brow of a knoll from the main battle, and thus was unobserved.

The motorist turned his car and got away from there at great speed.

SHERIFF Joe Kingman bulged into the convention hall and mounted the rostrum where a delegate was droning a speech on "Crime Waves and Their Meaning."

Sheriff Kingman held up his hand. Seventy-one bored delegates began to uncoil themselves from their seats.

"Gents," he bawled, "there's a big shootin' scrape up in Flat Valley, a little ways up north. I've got to go 'tend to it. If some of you people care to go along, I've got a few automobiles outside for you."

The convention adjourned unanimously through the doorway.

LOUIE THE SNITCH, late of New York but now a puzzled pilgrim in a demoniac, nightmarish and totally incomprehensible land, came out of his coma and learned that he was too badly racked to sleep or even doze. He tried to roll his tortured body into a comfortable position, but the effort brought such exquisite agony that at length he lurched to his feet, discovering that standing was easier than sitting.

His ears, still ringing and buzzing, began to discern popping noises near-by. Irregular explosions rattled and then subsided. He staggered out through the doorway and his bleary eyes discerned a tin bucket of water almost underfoot, which reminded him of a great hot thirst. He lifted the bucket and drank with the eagerness of a feverish pig, while jets of water sopped down outside his receding chin.

A stray bullet from over the hill kicked the bucket out of his hand, bounced it against the wall, and splashed the water into Louie's shoes.

"Ya-a-a-a-a-a!" he screeched, with the irritated fervor of a soul tormented past endurance.

Somebody laughed. For Louie it was the crowning insult.

He looked uphill where the bearded blond was lying behind a rock, loading a repeating rifle. Louie, bedeviled beyond all understanding, in the last extreme of exasperation, longing to get out of this mad

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land, let the man turn back to his work and then lurched around to the rear of the house, where the black stallion was tied to a tree by a short hackamore. He untied the rope without noticing that the saddle was off the animal.

"I'm t'rough!" announced Louie, between set teeth. "Dis country is de bunk. Nix. No more!"

The eastern rim of the hills was occupied by his husky acquaintances, so Louie staggered up through the brush of the western slope until he passed over the top. Luckily the bearded quintet was looking the other way.

With a last despairing effort he climbed on the horse, impelled by a savage, fatalistic desire to accept the torture and have it over with once and forevermore, and get to some place where he could feel more at home.

THE eighteenth annual convention of the Southwestern Peace Officers' Association rolled through a cañon and emerged upon a great flat valley with a few bare hills in the middle.

Sheriff Kingman's auto halted—it was the leading one of eleven—and he whipped out a pair of field glasses.

"Yep, trouble over there," he grunted. "It's on the other side of the hills. Mebbe they'll never see us till we git right up to them. Let's go!"

The convention proceeded at thirty-eight miles per hour.

INDIANS are stubborn, but facts are facts, and it began to dawn on the leader of the frowsy, besieging tribe that all this racket and gunfire was getting exactly nowhere; so after long consideration, he signaled to his mates, caused the firing to cease, and stood erect with hands uplifted, apprising the wary five on the hill that the war was suspended.

Some time later he ambled up the hill and met the five at close quarters.

"How much you want?" he inquired, bluntly.

The big blond eased his rifle, observing that the ire of the Indians had spent itself.

"Wadda you offer?" he demanded, with equal directness.

"One hundred dollar."

The bearded blond looked at his companions, who nodded. Their ammunition was running short, anyhow.

"All right," he decided. "A hundred in the hand is worth two in the bush, any day. Gimme it."

The Indian produced bills which once belonged to Louie. The white man counted them, handed twenty dollars to each of his companions, and then signaled the rest of the Indians to approach. When all eight of them were gathered, he led the way down to the house and around it.

There was no black stallion in view.

"Gone!" gasped the blond.

"You bunk me?" inquired the Indian, in a very quiet voice.

"No! Honest! I brought that hoss right here! I tied him to that cottonwood! See the marks on the bark? That little devil must have sneaked off with it!"

The Indian hesitating between doubt and suspicion, allowed his puzzled eyes to gaze through the shrubbery and then up toward the rim of the hills.

"Yow!" he howled. "You bunk me! Everybody bunk me! Look!"

Seventy-two armed gentlemen with badges on their chests were massed along the southern rim of the hills, gradually spreading northward along the whole range to surround the valley.

The bearded white men started to lift their rifles but desisted.

Seventy-two officers are entirely too many.

ALTHOUGH town was many miles away, the railroad circled far northward at certain points, and Louie's unbelieving eyes sighted the tracks far sooner than any reasonable person could have expected.

Gurgling and wheezing with delight, he lurched off the horse, staggered to the rails, kneeled down, and hugged an armful of ballast belonging to the railroad which promised to waft him far, far away.

The rails tingled slightly. Cocking his head, studying out the import, he swayed to his feet at last, turned upon the horse, kicked at it, winced, scooped up a handful of rock, and heaved it at the sweet-tempered stallion.

"G'wan, you mutt!" screamed Louie. "Get outa here before I croak you!"

The splendid gentleman in black walked a few paces, halted, turned his arched neck, gazed at his inferior with mute reproach, saw him reach for more missiles, and

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decided to start for home, where he arrived in due time, being received with joy by a heart-broken owner.

"G'wan!" snarled Louie, with a gesture of finality. "Me, I'm t'rough!"

The train appeared around a curve. Louis signaled frantically. As no good train abandons a marooned human being on the desert, this one slowed down and came to a halt while passengers gaped out of the windows and the harrowed Louie staggered toward the steps of the first chair-car.

Detective Michael Cassidy of New York, on his way home after a business trip to Los Angeles, was among those crowding the vestibule platform as the little, rat-faced gunman clambered painfully up the steps.

Detective Cassidy took one look at Louie's unmistakable face and then shoved through the crowd producing a pair of steel handcuffs. His voice was honeyed.

"Well, if it ain't Louie Fiegelbaum—Flat Head Louie!" welcomed Cassidy. "Glad to meecha, Louie! The boys have been lookin' for you, especially that political guy you sent to the hospital. We've got a nice, clean cell in Sing Sing all ready for you, Louie. Wadda you doin' out here? Enjoyin' yourself, I suppose?"

Louie let the handcuffs click on his wrists.

"No," said Louie, with a certain amount of truth.

SHERIFF Joe Kingman expanded with justified pride as he classified his Indian prisoners to a big group of his peers in the little valley.

"I've been tryin' to catch these here henroost and petty-larceny robbers for nigh on two years, but they had some hole-in-the-wall place where I couldn't find 'em. There's about thirty charges against 'em, gents. It's a good catch!"

"That's nothin'," grunted the lanky Sheriff of Puma County, New Mexico, alongside him. "See them five hombres over there? That's the Carson gang—bank robbers and cattle rustlers. Disappeared about four months ago. All sorts o' rewards out for 'em. Guess they've been hidin' in your county all the time!"

Sheriff Kingman's mouth opened, but he shut it quickly and kept his poker face.

"I wanted to give the convention a little surprize," he admitted.

"You mean to say you kept 'em here for us?"

"Not exactly; it was circumstances did it; but it helps the convention along, don't it?"

The other slapped his back.

"Help it? Man, you've given us the biggest and best show of 'em all! The other cities gave us banquets, the-aters, movies, prize-fights, dances and picnics, but you—you've given us somethin' real!"

DETECTIVE Michael Cassidy of New York, with little, red-faced Louie shoved against the window at his side, explained Louie frankly to the curious passengers who grouped around them.

"He's no good. New York bum, no education, no refinement, no nothin'. Gunman. Hop-head. Never done a good thing in his life!"

But maybe Detective Cassidy was wrong.

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THE LAST LAUGH

by Sidney Herschel Small

Author of "The Scarecrow," "Bloomin' Idol Made o' Mud," etc.

HE HAD lived in Osaka before the rice riots were even talked over by well fed, radical-minded students and then whispered along in hissing undertones to hungry coolies for performance—and that was a good many years ago.

White men believed that he had always been a part of the Orient. It was *said* that he had even witnessed the burning of the *kaminarimon*—the gate of the Thunder God—but this may not be true; white men are not to be trusted with such matters of time, since they always leave Japan after a probationary period, about the time they become really useful, and return to the States, promoted by ability, luck, dysentery, or marriage to a relative of the Old Man's wife. Many a gay silken kimono has brought interest out of all proportion to the original investment. True, the white men revisited the Far East—the formal name for the business is "investigation of foreign trade conditions"—but this only served to acquaint newcomers with definite notions regarding the passage of time.

He had a name, but it was seldom used. The Japanese called him *temaye*, which is the lowest pronoun possible—a *geta*-mender will balk at it. White men used this also, but since they needed something better than a pronoun in announcing to friends that they'd given him a couple of yen, they called him "One-Armed" George. With reason. The left arm was gone, clear to the shoulder.

Not even the shamblingest over-*saked* sweeper-coolie ever accorded him an honorable suffix. *Temaye*—One-Armed George. Can you call a bum Ludwig Ernst Georg von Baumingen und zu—even George himself was not certain what followed, unless he was drunk to the point of roaring, "*Du bist verrückt, mein Kind*," which, you will remember, was a ditty not entirely laudatory to one Wilhelm *der Zweite*—who had a difference in the size of his own arms; as a matter of fact the song expressed doubt as to that emperor's sanity.

Here, perhaps, was one reason why One-Armed George was where he was, and what he was; from the Hanoverian German he used, when drunk, it was obvious that he had received a university training. Sober, he spoke Japanese, larded thickly with English, French, Chinese, or German. If you have lived in Osaka you may even know some of the stories about him. The favorite one is that he ran away with some official's wife and was exiled for that reason. Although what any woman could see in the dirty old man was more than any Osakan might imagine. He did not talk about himself—more, he did not relish discussion concerning the missing arm, which, after all, was his own business.

Some sort of job was always his. He made a perfect interpreter in a buying expedition, unless the Japanese sellers bribed him more than you paid him, which was extremely likely. With his lone arm he was still better than a coolie with bales—until he got drunk. For one brief week he had been entrusted with a new suit of whites

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and the handling of the door to the Exporters' Club, up Hirozushimochi way, but where his major duty was to assist intoxicated members in—and out—he attempted the leading rôle himself.

It is not a matter of record, but the assistant steward, being a Eurasian, forgot to pay him for that week; the Chino, really a good—or bad—half white, had promised a donation to both Buddhist temple and Christian mission, and where else—even in a drunken club-member's pocket—was money to be picked up so safely and so easily?

George borrowed a yen gold from one of the governors of the club, who only laughed when George explained that the club still owed him eight yen twenty sen more, and proceeded to drink it up.

The door of the Exporters' had been the peak of George's jobs for a good many years. Now he was in the cañon, rockwalled ahead, and landslid across to the rear. He did not know the reason, but not even a coolie's work—with white employers—was open to him. The missionary, it seemed, had not been lax in what he considered his duty; he was a wise man, and did his work through the white men's wives.

Japanese employers of the higher class did not want George. Uneducated Japanese feared the wrath of gods, who themselves—or some of them—have hands ranging from three to seven, and would frown on any endeavor about which a one-armed man labored.

It was a state of affairs which George at last faced squarely. He was hungry. Worse, he was thirsty. He knew—had known—himself for what he was; his heart, he believed, was slowly turning to stone. He felt a curious chill there when he awoke in the morning—he slept in a three-sen inn—a dead weight, a mass to lift with every choked heart-beat. Something, he realized, must be done, and, with a long breath, he set about doing it.

Borrowing from white men, heretofore always a simple matter, had suddenly become difficult. They all seemed interested in affairs not evenly distantly touching George's, and one—why? George didn't know—even called him a —— Hun.

He wasn't a Hun. He was accustomed to being cursed, but there seemed to be a viperish condemnation in this term. What George did not know was that the world was moving, and that the Imperial Eagle was raiding again.

News comes slowly to the East. What is discussed in clubs does not get to the streets, unless it be an intended increase in the price of rice, or decrease in the wage paid coolies. A world war, as yet, was upper-class property.

The new damnation was a small matter. What troubled George most was that a week would elapse before steamer-day. Then, perhaps, some arrival might part with a yen or two, merely for the pleasure in saying—

"I thought you were dead and buried by this time, George, you old scoundrel!"

George had never begged from a Japanese, but seven days was a long time.

CLEAN, prosperous inns and eating-places, *gyuyas* even, he passed as he would have passed a white woman, any kind, clear down to one of Mexican Charley's harlots, with averted face. White men might have been inside; they often were. George was ready to beg, but he was not willing to have white men see him doing it.

George had started out breakfastless. He had two miserable sen remaining, and, since he had them before sleeping, he must have gone hungry that night. It was a misty, chill morning; the sun was up, but there was no exhilaration in it. Every one was busy—every one but the white man. A fine, drenching mist hung over the city, and soaked him as well as any driving rain. He worked steadily riverward, toward the Yodogawa, whose black and muddy waters seems to cut Osaka into a thousand islands, if the number of bridges to be crossed make a reckoning. He could have ridden on a tram had he known exactly where he was going; two sen was enough for that.

As he walked the districts became more and more squalid, and the children, evidence of poverty, more noticeable. The river, at each successive crossing, became less crowded with rafts and shallow boats; at length there was no bridge. George peered about him. His old eyes were no longer sharp, but on the opposite bank he seemed to see what he desired. This pleased him for a moment. He found a junk close by, paid his sen grudgingly and received several copper coins in change, and then, a man of

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leisure, watched the boatman go to the fore part of the ungainly craft, shove a long bamboo pole over the side, find bottom, and then push heavily until he had walked the length of the boat—and do it again, until the river was crossed. There was a short argument while the Japanese demanded, and did not receive, additional payment, after which the coolie discussed George's ancestors at great and voluble length.

On the far bank George watched boys, up to the groin in slime, search the river-bed for eels. Eels, with rice, were—eatable. At this time George would even have considered them succulent, since the stomach had less pride than the head.

It struck the man with the single arm that there was a vast difference to be found in a few miles; what connection could there be between Ford taxis and electric signs and moving-pictures—and looking for sewer-eels?

He told himself that he had come this distance, passing more promising places, because here the begging would be easier. Illiterate Japanese would be more willing to part with a few copper coins. Yet somewhere in his old head he had an idea that they might accept some work as payment here—and that there would be no white men about if they simply flung him a coin and told him in the name of all the three or more thousand demons to get out. Even the coin was no certain thing.

The inn of the New Moon—the curvature of the river might have had something to do with the name—toward which George stumbled, grew on the bank like a water-fungus. It had a reputation of sorts—it was considered lower than the lowest. You had a better chance of finding a Yoshiwara runner there than a street coolie. Since even cockroaches must drink and eat, this hovel of misery had a certain fame among them, for the strength of the electric brandy, the sticky cloyingness of the boiled macaroni, and for serving balls of shredded flesh, speckled profusely with white lumps, to name which would be to expose.

There were no sliding outer screens; the New Moon needed more privacy than that. Boards, the color of the river-mud, and no cleaner nor sweeter-smelling, made up the outside of the inn; no windows faced the river—even in mid-morning the New Moon needed lamps—and the door could only be told by a narrow slit in the wood.

A path led to the inn. Mud trodden hard, and an inch or so lower than the neighboring ooze; in the rainy season the Yodogawa, shallow torrent, overflows its banks and surges beneath the floor of the inn itself; there was no branch leading to any street or alley, and George saw that what guests the place had, came—for reasons of their own—by the river.

He came to the door, and tried pushing, stopping as soon as he saw that a pair of eyes watched his fruitless efforts.

"Open!" he requested politely in Japanese.

The door moved sufficiently to permit him to sidle in. He bowed and smiled, drawing in his breath hissingly.

A smell of wicked bodies, foul kimonos and runner-jackets, *saké*, cigaret smoke and horrible language made the air well-nigh intolerable. A Chinese sailor, marked for his father by the hair on his chest, lay snoring almost across the threshold; another man, naked to the waist, pillowed across his knees. Two Yoshiwara hangers-on sprawled in a corner, partly for fear of an unexpected visit by the police—who would come a dozen at a time, knowing the New Moon—partly because, having already tumbled once, they feared to fall there again if they rose. A low table was under the lamp, on which some game was being played.

The hairy Chinese breathed short and hard, the power of his exhaled air dimming the already gloomy lamp.

George, his eyes filled with the glare of the river, bowed at random, smiled all over his face, and searched for the host. He stepped deeper into the room, brought up against the sleeping pair, and, in falling, nearly took the innkeeper with him. If he had actually laid hand on the other, to stay himself, he would have proved again what had been tested before—the sharpness of the fellow's *wakizashi*.* The two sleepers did not move, although the uppermost groaned and twitched in the legs. From this the potency of the liquor served was apparent, and George was glad he had come.

For the first time, as he came to his feet, full of apology, he had a good look at his host, and altered his opinion with even greater rapidity than he had formed it.

The keeper of the New Moon was a small man. He had the look, the build, of a

**wakizashi:* dirk, pointed and edged, between eight and nine inches long. The handle is never ornamented, and is sometimes made of metal.

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woman; he had a woman's face, feminine even to the stirring of the nostrils. Not the face nor the figure stirred George with distrust and vague fear, but the peculiarly-opaque yellowish eyes. Cream-color. Brown, washed out. The moment the man spoke—he had the soft, purring way of a cat, which fooled the white man none at all—George's dread solidified.

"Well," the innkeeper said sleekly, "What do you want?"

IT WOULD have been vastly easier if the man had opened the conversation—as is proper—with some ornamental and roundabout phrase, and gradually worked to the place where George might have stated his request with a certain amount of dignity. The one-armed man sensed that evasion was impossible. He thought glumly that the bank of the river was slippery, and that if the card players were called into the conference that he, George, would assuredly land in the river proper.

"I may get an eel out of it," he reflected, "and trade the eel for a bowl of *oden*."

The innkeeper waited for George to speak.

"Well?"

With this urging George wheezed into action.

"I—I could do you a service," he said timidly.

"Do it, then," the innkeeper whipped at him, and George was no better off than before.

"There would be errands? I could rinse the dishes—sweep—"

"*Hai-ya!* So you have no money, and you are hungry? You desire food and drink, but have not the means to pay?"

George admitted that it was so.

"If I wish errands, this *Shina-jin*"—the host stirred the prostrate figure with his foot—"will go for me, being already in my debt. Of what need have I to sweep? Those who use my floor as a bed do not care for such small matters as insects. I am very busy this morning, *seiyojin*. But"—smiling—"would a yen be of any use to you?"

George bowed.

"I thought that it would," the host said, and, smiling more tenderly than before, went about his business.

The one-armed white man stood, undecided.

He said, finally, while the host doled out liquor from a little keg he carried—

"I know the honorable commissioner of police—perhaps sometime I might say a word to him about you, if—"

"*Jibun ga horitsu wo okashi saye senya nanimo junsa no kawai koto wa-nai-hadzusa!*" the innkeeper spat at him, almost all of a breath. "So long as I don't break the law, there is no reason why I should be the least afraid of the police! Besides, if a beggar such as yourself knows the commissioner so well, why do you not go to him?"

There was no answer to that. Again George saw that he had drawn a blank.

He started to the door.

Some one called after him—

"*Doitsu-jin!*"

There, again, was the insult; what was wrong, so suddenly, with being German? He had been a German many years, but had always been called merely a foreigner; now, apparently, there was a demarcation of venom, and he was on the lower side of it. What difference? He had been called many names; he would doubtless be called many more before he died—and, from the state of his empty insides, that would happen before very long. What difference that, either?

He heard a thin, tremulous voice—

"*Soriol** Konohako! What is this?"

"A beggar. A foreigner. A white man. He goes as he came."

"*Mah!* Have I taught you no more than that, Konohako? He came in hunger, and you allowed him to depart without food? Say nothing! A blind man learns to know things he may not see. Since when is it permitted to allow anyone to leave our house unfed? What will our honorable ancestors think of this? What success will they accord our inn, or the gods either? Call for him to return, my son."

This was not necessary. George had not yet gone.

Konohako glanced about. He made a noise in his throat, something concerning gods, ancestors, and his own efforts, even his kindness in maintaining an old and blind parent, but since the card players were sufficiently drunk to think of parental duty and the gods, he smiled immediately.

"Sit at the table, *doitsu-jin*," he commanded sweetly, "and you will be fed until

* eldest son.

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your one arm aches with conveying the food to your mouth."

George had not seen the innkeeper's father, but when he found a corner of the table the old man sidled up to him, feeling his way along the table's edge, and trying the clothing of each man. George began to eat before the ancient Japanese was beside him.

"He said 'one arm'," the old man muttered, and proved this for himself. "What did *you* do to the gods?" he added.

George had a flippant answer ready, but found himself saying soberly—his mouth full nevertheless—

"It is what the gods have done to me, honorable father."

"*Mah!*" in astonishment. "You do not speak the guttural Japanese—coolie-talk—like most foreigners."

"I have lived here a long time," George said. He had. More years than he cared to remember.

"Long? Can you remember the brocade-*samuari?* Can you remember the—the what? I am old, and for my sins I can no longer see—"

George looked at the patient face. The man was old; he was surely as old as George himself. Also, his face was lined with the indelibility of sorrow. His kimono was old also, but of heavy silk, made by some hand loom.

"They make no silk like that now," George said aloud. "I remember when the silk came into Osaka—silk like that. Heavy. *Ja!* How many years ago was that? Before Osaka was smoked like a herring by the factories and works—"

Konohako looked at the pair curiously. They spoke together earnestly, and the old man's head shook or nodded excitedly as George spoke, or his tongue wagged in interested answer. Konohako opened his mouth, shut it, smiled, and seemed more the woman than before.

"Konohako!" the old man called at last. "My friend and myself will drink!"

"You are too old," Konohako objected, his tongue in his cheek. "Besides, this liquor is not good enough for you."

"Do I speak of pig's-wallow, son? In my room we have—"

"What will be preserved from *seiyojin*. What does such a one know of—"

"Silence! I have talked with this foreigner, and he is a man of intelligence. I like him. Konohako—"

"Well—"

"If this foreigner would come each day and talk to me—I would keep out of the drinking-room, as you have so often requested."

Konohako smirked gleefully. He had been about to suggest the same thing himself.

"It is impossible," he said. "Impossible. Who will come here? What Japanese would come to see you, even if your name is honorable, and if once you were—a man? This foreigner will stay a day, drink, eat, and then be gone again—and I shall have you underfoot, interrupting what is not your business. You had your chance, old one, and failed."

The father's lips moved.

"My friend," he whispered to George, "You and I are old. We will not be here long. I can guess well enough what kind of place this is, although I have seen nothing for twenty years—would you stay with an old man—a friend—and we can read together, and talk together? I—I trust you. I will make a promise, if—"

George of the single arm blinked. He could fool a man in possession of his senses any day of the seven, and often did, but this was not the same. The old Japanese was obviously a gentleman, and—what had not happened in many years—treated George as the same. George licked his lips, and then said—

"I will stay."

"Good! I have hidden several books of the Kojiki, and we will discuss—Konohako! Listen, son. I will agree to remain out of this room until I join my ancestors, provided my white friend remains with me!"

"And if he goes?" Konohako suggested.

"If—he goes, I remain away despite that. Is it agreed?"

"It is agreed."

The ancient tucked his arm through George's, and drew the other to his feet, and after him.

"You will read to me," he said happily, "and then we will discuss such learning as only students as you and I can appreciate. You—you will not leave me my friend? I must stay away from the inn-room, and in my own none will ever come to visit me, save, perhaps"—lowering his voice to a penetrating whisper—"perhaps a servant with food, if I am not forgotten. You will stay with me? You will not depart as soon as

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food has given you strength again? *Hail* but we are finished, you and I. Let us remain together what little time the gods leave us."

Why not? It would serve for a time, at least. Here, surely, would be food enough, drink enough, and a place in which to sleep, until something else turned up. By entertaining the old Japanese he might actually consider that he was earning what he would receive. It was better than nothing, and more than he had expected.

"I WILL stay," One-Armed George said, and then, advocate, hurried into, "I will read to you from the lesser and greater poets, and we can investigate the *Adsumi-Kagami*,* provided some one gets us a copy, and contemplate together the evil changes which have come about in this world. As we drink"—he stopped and thought how very thirsty he was—"as we drink, we will observe delicate phrases of beauty—"

He was profuse, was One-Armed George, but the old man needed no urging; the ancient Japanese rubbed his hands together in delight, and said, suddenly fiercely insistent:

"These are not merely words? You do not simply talk? You speak as would—one noble to another? Men of honor?"

Konohako, missing nothing and striving for all—One-Armed George realized this—found that statement entrancing, but said nothing. He would get the old one out of the inn-room, and, of late, his father had a habit of asking questions better left unanswered, and of understanding that which Konohako—knowing his own business best—would have been more pleased to have the other misconceive.

One-Armed George knew that he had made the promise, or, what amounted to the same thing, agreed, without the slightest worry about a subsequent breaking of the vow. George had made many promises, he was unable to remember if he had kept any of them.

The blind Japanese peered at him fixedly with the intensity of the sightless, and George unconsciously made of his own face the mirror of frankness and honesty. He did it well. He would have fooled many. Konohako, however, laughed gently. George, at the sound, blinked, although his face remained warily stolid.

A card player shouted in anger; a second egged him on. Others protested violently. It looked as if a knife would be called upon to decide the argument, until Konohako, not turning his head nor raising his voice from its ordinary cadence, snarled them down. The noise subsided to mutters—the game continued. Across the threshold, the Chinese snored like a pig, and his companion scratched in his sleep. The Yoshiwara attendants, sober enough to attempt to motions, gambled for a stolen ornamented comb.

Konohako laughed again.

One-Armed George moved uneasily in his seat, coming slowly to an erect position. It came to him, with increasing unpleasantness, that the tenure suggested by the blind man might be shortened according to the son's desire; he would remain by sufferance only, and Konohako's patience was not to be relied upon unless it served Konohako's own ends. Despite this, since he must say something, he mumbled—

"I stay."

One-Armed George had made promises and to spare in his time, but he was wearily afraid—with a touch of grimness in his fear—that now Ludwig Ernst George—rightfully dead, and with no possible duty in interfering—had spoken for him, where silence would have been wiser. And hard upon his vowed "I stay" he heard the withered old Japanese' happy cackle of approval, and, mingled instantly with that, a sound as if all the sweetness of a hundred pear-blossoms had settled in Konohako's slender womanish throat; the son had laughed for the third time.

THE room was tiny, six mats,* but there was space enough for both old men—George and Motōori; space also for a heap of ragged *futon* in which to sleep; or, during days when charcoal for the brazier was not forthcoming to warm aged bodies. A square was kept vacant on the matting, where what food was allotted them might be set; on this area blind Motōori also demonstrated many an attacking force's position. The retreat was dirty, and the number of insects about was best attested to by the

*The Mirror of the East: a history concerning day by day happenings, more read by nobles than priests, for obvious reasons.

*A mat is 6x3 feet: rooms are always measured by this standard.

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paunched spiders which hung in every corner of the ceiling; the filth worried Motöori more than it did George. What troubled the white man was this: every panel had its finger-size peep-hole—secrecy and suspicion on the part of others made him suspicious, uneasy, himself.

The mirrors of the East had been discussed and argued. Japanese history had been compared with European, at which times the blind Japanese was given to remark that it verified his opinion about fighting and prayer.

"You can see that prayers make a man valiant," Motöori decided. "First let him think he is invulnerable and his purpose beloved of the gods, and then give him a sword or two, and much may be accomplished. At a pinch I would prefer the sword, if I were given only one choice, but the combination is perfect."

At the beginning George always agreed, having food, drink and shelter in mind, but as they advanced in friendship they had heated discussions, after which they drank together with satisfaction and zest. It was difficult to count the days. Motöori often suggested to George that they must go outside and walk about in the sun, but Konohako was always with them in that, and saw to it that they did not go far. It became simpler to take what air they wished on the riverbank in the early morning, where George would take the place of the vanished vision of the Japanese.

THE mirrors of the East had reflected their last; they were deep now in the philosophy of Kiuso, a square book which Motöori had concealed in a bundle of clothing.

George read slowly:

"First of all comes righteousness, next life, then silver and gold. If a man—"

"That is wise," Motöori said gravely. "It is not followed in these days."

"Wrong, wrong. Begin with the gold, and work backwards, Motöori, and you have it perfectly."

Motöori muttered something, in which George caught Konohako's name.

"Read on, *o ani san*—brother," he said aloud.

"Avarice and cowardice are the same," George continued. "If a man is stingy of his money, he will also grudge his life."

George stopped. Here was something they would take apart, and, at the very end, chew the bones of the thought.

He was not mistaken in thinking Motöori would have comment ready, but what the ancient Japanese said was in no wise what George expected.

"True, true indeed," Motöori said. Then, sharply, yet so softly that the sound barely reached the white man's ears:

"What is going on in this place, old friend? I have no eyes, but I can hear!"

George said promptly and honestly, whispering—

"Then you have been hearing what I have not seen."

"That is true also. *Hai-ya!* For many years I have been alone, and so my ears have picked up noises that are almost unbelievable. If I told you that I could hear the silkworm crunching its food, what would you say?"

"That you lied, *ani san!*"

"Well—I spoke hastily. I but made a figure of speech. There have been strange things happen in this place which desecrates the moon's name, my friend. I have guessed at them, for I have never really known. And I tell you that some such thing is about to take place again. I—I do not like it."

George believed that anything was possible in the New Moon, and said so.

"Should I be grateful to my son that he feeds me?" Motöori asked. "What less could he do? That saying about gold—as you interpreted it—fits Konohako. It does indeed. For gold he will do much. Anything. Once we had much—it went. Konohako was a babe. My *daimyo* needed money to preserve his honor, and his honor was mine—*mah!* I expect you could tell a tale yourself, eh?"

"I could," George said, but didn't.

"And, unless I am very mistaken, honor entered into your troubles as well as mine?"

George's grunt might have been taken to mean anything or nothing.

" 'Better a happy head than a full belly,' " Motöori told him.

"I can see, from that, that you have always had plenty of food!"

"You think so? I can remember—but what difference does it make now? *Ho!* Whenever I formerly said some bit of sense to Konohako—I say little to him now—he answered that when we have sufficient gold

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again none will care how it is obtained. Is there any truth in that, *ani san?*"

"Enough and to spare, in these days," George said.

"I was afraid so."

The two men were silent, until George said finally—

"Shall I read again?"

"Read? What? Yes. Where were we? I grow old, and do not always remember easily. I—tell me, do you hear anything from your country?"

"They think I am dead," George said.

Motöori considered that thoughtfully.

"You will return some day?"

"No," the white man said harshly. "All of me that will ever be in Germany is there now."

"Your arm?"

George gulped. He had meant that which he could not remain alive without, that which for a split second pumped hot blood to his whiskered old cheeks.

"My arm," he agreed.

"That time *you* lied," Motöori said. "How did you lose it?"

"My heart?"

"Your arm, foolish one!"

George said nothing.

A thin trickle of maudlin laughter seeped into the room, and the Japanese shivered. Then, controlling himself, he leaned forward, his mouth at George's ear:

"If—*if* there were a fighting in your country, and you returned to fight bravely, would what has not been your fault be forgiven?"

"Only women and children speak in riddles," George muttered.

"And the gods! Do not forget that. If there were fighting, and your land was in danger, would you return?"

George's lips moved, and only a blind man could have heard what he said:

"Who wants one arm in a battle?"

"So! You would go, but—"

"Can a snail go from Tokio to Nagasaki in an afternoon?"

Motöori put a hand on George's sleeve.

"Go to my clothes, *ani san*. No! First look about. Is any one watching? Go to every peephole, and I will listen for scurrying feet. None? Good! Now, lift the kimonos one by one. *Mah!* You have found a bag? Bring it to me! So. In my hand."

Motöori, with trembling fingers, untied the many-knotted cord, and took from the cloth bag a small bowl, the like of which One-Armed George had never seen, even when accompanying some buyer into the interior.

"Is it not lovely? There is something divine in the making of a bowl like this, *ani san!* Blanched dust of rocky bones and the stony flesh of ancient hills. How old? A hundred years? A thousand? It has been in my family for many, and must have been an emperor's before it came to us. Examine the edge! Is it not black as the pupil of the eye, and as lustrous? Then the circling of white, pure as mourning garments, and next the blue, brilliant as a mirror, bright as the cheek of the sky! *Hai!* I can not see it, but memory makes me a poet. What do you think of it, my friend?"

"I have never seen such a beautiful thing."

"It would be worth much money?"

George nodded, and then, since Motöori waited for him to speak, said:

"A thousand yen. More. Several thousand, if sold in the right place."

"Good. Take it. It is yours, and with the money you receive you will go across the sea and fight." Hastily, "Put it out of sight! Konohako does not know I possess it; he thinks it sold."

"Why do this for me?"

"Because—what matter?"

"I must know."

"Well—know, then! Who else have I met for ten years—twenty—thirty—who has been kind to the blind one? Who? None, I say! What can I do more pleasing to the gods than assisting a good man to recover his honor—I mean"—rapidly—"in the sight of those who do not understand. It is yours."

"WAIT," said One-Armed George. "Firstly, *ani san*, I am not certain I wish to return. Secondly, I could not take what is yours, and of so great value, considering what little I have done—and that in return for food! And thirdly, there is no fighting, and has not been for years."

"Did I not say I have keen ears? How long have we been together in this room?"

"A month?"

"At least. More. Two, perhaps. In less than a day the world was made! In a half hour gods have transported mountains. Think, then, what may happen in a month!"

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George said sullenly—

"Tell me what you know!"

"I *know* nothing for certain. But I have heard—much. Whispers come to me. There is a fighting going on. I do not understand why, but there is not always a 'why' to fighting. Your country fights! I am certain of it. Mine, also, I believe, or will, before long—I am not positive of just how it all is coming about."

"Mine? Yours? Where?"

"In Europe, naturally. I think perhaps that Shantung will be involved."

"Germany fights—with whom?"

Motöori shrugged his shoulder.

"I believe the whole world is at it," he said, as if that were a minor matter.

"Germany and Japan—together?"

"No," Motöori grinned. "Apart. Enemies."

One-Armed George huddled closer into his quilts, and reached a hand for the bottle of liquor. He poured two thimble-like cups to the brim, handed one to Motöori, drank the other with noisy politeness, and then, swiftly, picked up the bottle and drank silently, a long, breath-taking draught. He understood what motivated Motöori; the old Japanese considered that food and drink was not payment, but merely courtesy, and that it was *buskido** to speed a departing enemy, to give him every means to be able to fight with honor. More, Motöori liked him. George's lips writhed in a grimace.

"Why not, since our countries are enemies, settle the matter here? You can blindfold me; we will each take a knife, and so decide it all without the inconvenience of going several thousand miles?"

"You are bitter," Motöori said sadly. "I? My fighting is done! I promised—it makes no difference whom I promised—to fight no more. It—it is a tale, like yours, that is best unspoken. But you will take the vase and go?"

"No," George said gently. "If you will have me, I will stay with you. Your years—mine—are nearly done."

"I hoped you would say that," Motöori smiled. "What have we to do with the world's affairs? I only wanted to show you that I wished to help you, who are my friend and brother. Just the same, *ani san*, I do not believe the New Moon is as peaceable as it might be. Konohako is busier than a stork with fledglings, and bursts with importance. He always acts so when he sees gold in sight. It is a habit of his. *Mah!* There never was a prettier, chubbier baby than Konohako."

"He is pretty yet," George said thoughtfully.

"Pretty yet. Yes. He could act a woman's part, couldn't he? Do not count on his beauty, my friend. What is more graceful than a tiger-cat? Sometimes—I am afraid of him. It is not natural, the way he is made in the face. Does he like you?"

George did not reply, and Motöori was glad that the white man omitted verbal verification.

George read, with few comments or interruptions from his companion, until at last Motöori began to nod and drool at the mouth with sleep; then, marking the place, he poured a nightcap, saw that the other was properly protected by the quilts, and, blowing out the light, crawled again into his own.

Had Motöori really known—was it true?

His old eyes ached from following the print, and he shrugged his way deeper into the *futon*.

He could not sleep.

Outside, he knew, flowed that muddy stream, thick with filth, polluted with sewage, slimy with eels, but somewhere, not to be seen by him again, was a broad blue river, cool, fragrant, pure; somewhere men lifted their voices together in song, and clapped one another on the back—and here was One-Armed George.

"I must sleep," he thought. "What is, is. I must sleep."

He became wider awake.

He did not know the time. Time—what was time? He had no watch. How long since he had owned one? How much had he pawned it for? His father's, that watch—how much had he received? He did not remember. Had he taken Elsa's picture from the back of the case before pawning it? He did not remember that, either.

It came to him now, fiercely, that if he had been involved in that duel with anyone save his regimental commander people might have believed differently of him. Even Elsa—and he had done what he had done because of her name, and his. Bah! He had been a fool!

He remembered how tenderly the regimental commander had been carried from the field, and how the *verdamte Kerl* had

*Honorable conduct.

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screamed that Ludwig Ernst Georg had forced the matter on him; how he was advised to leave the country, since the *oberst* would certainly swear to anything to obtain revenge, and how—his left arm throbbing from the thrust he had received—he had gone as they suggested, insisted; *Gott!* how the arm had hurt when gangrene set in! Every one had written him, even to Elsa, that at last they realized what kind of man he was; his brothers had sent him money while he was in the Swiss hospital losing his arm, and told him to take it and go as far as he could.

Well, he had gone, and where could he go more distant than here? He must never think again as he did this night. He must take what little he had, and strive to wring every tittle of enjoyment from it. He must—

George had been silent, motionless, but now he began to breathe slowly and regularly, timing his exhalations from Motöori's wheezing; experimentally, the one-armed man achieved a snore. It was so successful, even to his own ears, that he repeated the performance with gusto.

A panel had been pushed back. Some one, beyond doubt, was either looking into the room or was actually in it.

His first rapidly formed idea was that Konohako or some other devil of like calibre had seen Motöori's valuable porcelain, and proposed to obtain it. Should he, George, fight for what was his friend's? He knew what the result would be, but, again, honor entered into the affair. He must decide what to do and, in the meantime, fight to simulate sleep.

It was Konohako; a lamp burning in the corridor made the darkness penetrable and disclosed the rounded figure of the Japanese, and, with him, another burlier man. Both were in their stockinged feet, and made no sound on the thick old matting-floor.

"They sleep like the dead," Konohako's soft voice whispered. "I have come here many nights to see what they have been up to. I have even searched the white man's pockets"—news to George—"without his knowing. He did not move, did not even sigh in his sleep."

The other man muttered in guttural Japanese, like that of the north islands—

"Pull down the covering and let me look at him."

George smiled sadly. He had been thinking about that accursed lying voice of that infernal and *verdammte oberst*—was the matter still so close to him that he must imagine now that he actually heard it? *Pfui!* He was senile! If only the man had spoken in German—yet the intonation of the words were such as a white man might have used. He was sure of that much. His skin prickled, but he was master of his nerves sufficiently to snore.

"An unnecessary risk," Konohako demurred. "If you wish, however—"

"It makes no difference. What do we care? Now, where will you put it?"

It? George, motionless, brought one eye to bear, and then promptly froze stiff.

"It," he saw, was a knife, the blade without any glimmer or glint; unless George was mistaken it had recently done duty. Worse, and more to the point, it was likely to serve again. Weaponless, wrapped in the thick *futon*, what chance did he have, or Motöori either. He closed his eyes.

"Under the bedding?" the guttural voice asked.

"Yes. That would be the first place they will look. No! Suppose the old fool wakes—sometimes they sleep until three or four in the morning and then go about their reading again. Let us put it—in a corner, under the matting. It will make a little visible hump, and be seen by those who should see it."

"So."

That word might be English. Spoken as it was, short, curt, George knew it for the German it really was. His tongue touched his lips nervously.

George did not open his eyes. Time enough to discover the corner later.

A tiny scratching noise: the knife was hidden. A second sound, no louder. That would be the panel closed again.

"If I had coughed or moved," the one-armed man thought, "we would have gone no farther with Kiuso and his philosophy. Shall I get up and investigate? Investigate what? I know what is concealed in the room. I wish Motöori were awake, but I hope he sleeps. I have an idea we will be spied upon this night. *Ja!* Motöori knew his son. Something is in the wind, and I do not like the smell. Before long there will be excitement about the New Moon, the end of which will be the accusation of myself on the strength of the knife. However, I ought to have time to consider what to do—if I can do anything. Hide the knife elsewhere?

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Konohako will see to it that neither Motöori nor myself leave the room, which efficiently prevents me from throwing the confounded thing away. Who came with Konohako? I think I know. But for what purpose? Did he know me? Never, or— But what brings the *oberst* here? Something! I wish I did not feel that I was watched, I want a drink. This"—grimly—"is one time where I am forced to face trouble without being drunk."

He took no credit to himself for that.

Sleep was impossible. Konohako had apparently permitted him to remain, having in mind just some such trick. A man with gold must have stumbled into the New Moon, and, instead of tumbling the body into the river to make food for eels, Konohako had decided to rid himself of the one-armed encumbrance at the same time. George half admired the other's plan. If what Motöori said was true—that Japan and Germany were no longer friendly—it would eliminate any doubt as to what would happen to George. Again, what had the *oberst* to do with mere robbery? George's old commander was not down-and-out: George had seen that. He *thought* it was the *oberst*. Was it? If Germany and Japan were at war—was the *oberst* a spy? Konohako would do anything for gold.

"What kind of fighting will they do?" George wondered. "Stick out their tongues at one another! Anyhow, I do not believe it. Germany and France, yes. Or England, even. But—*ach!* it is out of the question! Old Motöori hears what is not so. Will morning never come?"

The room received little outside light, and George could only guess the passing time. The little raised place of the matting, made by the hidden knife, became a spot intolerable to his eyes, almost a Bluebeard chamber. George grunted, groaned, and turned in his quilts; he was rewarded by hearing a mouselike noise in the corridor.

"I thought as much," he mumbled into a mouthful of quilt.

His experiment told him definitely that the room was watched. In addition, he was illy served by his performance: Motöori woke instantly, all at once, and laid a hand on George's bedding—

"Waken, *ani san!*"

One-Armed George moaned, shook, twisted, and then became still.

"Come! We have had sleep enough, and, besides, I have thought of something, in my sleep—"

The white man contorted in his quilts, and then sat up, licking his lips. He wanted to place a secretive finger over his lips—which the blind man could not see. He wanted to say, "hush!" and dared not.

He took refuge in words.

"It is blacker than well-prepared ink," he said jerkily. "My eyes are heavy with sleep. Wait until I light the lamp—"

He made great play of that, fumbling about clumsily with his one hand. Somewhere in the business he managed to find Motöori's arm and squeeze it tightly for a moment. The other drew in his breath with a minute hiss, and George knew that the signal was recognized.

"I believe that a flea woke me," Motöori said. "My old hide is tough; I do not mind their biting, but, like the sage Zoshi, I object to their jumping about." Motöori clucked complacently, playing his part. "I never could understand why fleas remain here; surely there is more meat elsewhere." He paused, and then said calmly, "Perhaps you might look for the disturbers?"

"It does no good to look if one sees nothing," George said.

"That is true," the Japanese agreed calmly.

The two old men grinned; they understood each other.

"Well," Motöori suggested, "we are both awake. I am sorry—I say so from politeness—that I woke you, but since we are both awake, why should we not improve what time we have left, and discuss the wonders of learning?"

"There may be very little time remaining us," George said.

Motöori's old lips tightened.

"Yes," he said soberly, "we are both very old."

He did not mean what he said, but realized that George would know that it was the proper answer.

"We stopped reading—where was it? I do not seem to remember."

"At the discussion of dead men," George said blithely. "You argued that none of the early sages was prepared to admit—"

"And I argue it still," Motöori said shrilly. George could see that, although still in the half-dark, his companion was shaken. "I say that if a man is about to die—"

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"Is dead already, *ani san!* We did not consider future events."

"Yes," the ancient said breathlessly. "You are right there."

"It would be wise to consider them now," George went on. "Wait until I light us each a cigaret. Open your lips, my friend; there. Now if I can find those bits of twisted paper we will smoke without burning our noses—"

As the white man bent forward, Motöori mumbled into his ear:

"Who has been killed? Does it affect us—you?"

George, lifting the lighted spill, whispered:

"I do not know. It will affect me. The knife has been hidden in the room."

TWO men began to smoke placidly; George read steadily again after the fictitious argument had been noisily concluded.

Suddenly Motöori stopped him.

"Listen!" he said.

George listened.

"I hear nothing," he said.

"That is because you trust half to your eyes! I tell you that a man is sleeping in the hall!"

George strained his ears.

"Nothing," he said again.

"You must trust my senses," Motöori said swiftly. "It is true. He who watches is asleep. Now, what has happened?"

"I do not know," the white man whispered. "Only this—" and he told what little he had heard, and what he guessed was the rest.

Motöori said:

"I agree. It is Konohako's notion of a joke! He is my son, but I can not understand why the gods doubly punished me. The vanished sight should have been enough. Konohako has been playing with you—me—and now will have a perfect excuse if I protest. He is always dutiful—after a fashion! If it were known he abused his father, he would doubtless lose trade here, especially if I spoke to a priest, and so he does what he does in roundabout manner. He has never forgiven me for our departed fortune, even though there was in no other way in honor. There assuredly is no honor in this business. Who do you think has been killed—or, rather, how much did Konohako make from the dead man's pockets?"

"More was made than from his pockets, *ani san.*"

Motöori blinked.

"You think that treachery enters into the matter—treachery as great as preparing to incriminate a friend of my son's father?"

"What else? Why should Konohako have business with an enemy of his country?"

"But you are not sure—"

"No."

Motöori mumbled. "A traitor," and then said slowly, "We must waste no more time. You had better get the knife."

"Where can we hide it?"

Motöori grinned.

"The last place they will look for it," he said. "Go to that cupboard, and be careful lest, in opening it, you make a sound. You will find my sword. You will shove the knife into the scabbard, if it is not too large, and then—*mah!*—who will look for one weapon concealed in another?"

Silence, while the Japanese listened intently.

"He is deep in sleep now," he said finally. "He waited to see if anything would happen if he awoke, and was completely fooled by our calm discussion and reading. Now Konohako's part will be that of a three-tailed ape, and my son will not find it pleasant."

The stained *wakisashi* was lifted from its place of concealment, and, at Motöori's suggestion—since he loved a comedy, and actors in a fog—a little pile of down from the quilt was substituted. The incriminating weapon was slid out of sight in the scabbard of Motöori's family sword.

"Now let them look," the Japanese exulted. "This brainwork has given me an appetite; I hope we receive a good breakfast!"

George wished that he had something of the other's confidence.

THE main room of the inn of the New Moon was not purified from previous nights by the clear air of morning. Sleepers sprawled about on the floor grotesquely, one still clasping his final glass and sleeping with horrible tenseness, from which he would ultimately awake, unrefreshed, with a jerk. The central lamp still burned smokily, almost extinguished in the thick air of the room.

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Konohako slept, this morning, or appeared to sleep, under the table, although he had a room of his own and often retired to it when all of the drinkers were sodden and snoring.

The door was tried, and then knocked upon.

Feigning a loud yawn, Konohako growled:

"Who's there at this hour? Go away. Depart. We are all asleep, worn out. I will give nothing to drink—not for a yen, gold. I need sleep."

The answer came clearly—

"Open! It is a government matter!"

"I have done nothing," Konohako wailed. "Why disturb me? Every one here can account for himself. Have you a paper to admit you?"

"Open," he was told. "Talk less."

Konohako stood up, and went to the door. He slid back the bolts, then paused, then turned the key, then paused to breathe hard, his hand upon the latch. When he shoved the door from him he made a picture of disturbed righteousness, aroused from sleep.

"What is all this?" he asked timorously. "The New Moon's reputation—"

"Is known to us all," a man in uniform told him.

The Japanese officer glanced disgustedly about the room.

"You have a noble collection here, innkeeper!"

"Some day I can afford a better inn, honorable officer, and then I can pick my guests, but—what can a man do here?"

"Answer me some questions, liar! Did a white man come here last night, late?"

Konohako bowed in assent.

"To see a second white man?"

Konohako bobbed again.

"He saw him?"

"Both went"—jerking his head behind him—"into that room."

"If you lie to me I will make your nose look like a pomegranate after the seeds have been extracted, cow-face. Where is the white man now?"

"Which one?" Konohako asked innocently.

"The little one, fool! The short one, who had glasses of gold stuck to his nose! Answer me!" Here would be a *third* white man, for the prowler in George's room had been a large man, and George certainly wore no glasses, and was no newcomer.

"For all I know," Konohako said pleasantly, "he still sleeps. For that matter," he added gratuitously, "they both sleep, although not in the same room."

"Now I know you try to deceive," the officer snapped. "Show me the room where the little man—sleeps. You"—to a half-dozen men still outside the door—"keep one eye on this eel with the twisting tongue, and the other on the scum in this room. Now, innkeeper, lead the way. It will save the state money if you try to escape, remember, and my temper is not very good this morning."

Konohako trotted across the room, slid back a panel, and then gave the officer a geisha-like smile—

"Look! See for yourself. I spoke the truth. He sleeps."

The officer shoved his way past Konohako and into the sleeping-chamber. He bent over.

"What we expected," he snarled. "Murdered."

"Dead?" Konohako whined. "Really dead? This is terrible. *Hai!* My poor inn—my trade will vanish."

"And you with it, innkeeper!"

"Me? What have I done? Is it a crime to allow a man a sleeping-place? I merely permitted this dead *seiyo-jin* to meet another, and now you try to blame the blameless. I need what few yen I can pick up"—

"Liar twice! You talk too much. Listen: you said the other foreigner slept here also—which is a lie—"

"He does, great and important one. Shall I show him to you?"

"Yes. Do. And, innkeeper, do not appear surprized when you discover that he has, without your knowing it, departed! What you coolies will do for a piece of gold! Honor—*mah!*—what do you care for that—or that this little dead white man was an ally of your country?"

"Possibly the murderer has gone. We will go and look. But I must humbly insist that I left him in his room, composed for slumber, and, since he appeared an honorable man, and we have so little space here—I am a poor man—I allowed him to sleep with my honorable father—"

"Then, idiot, your honorable father, if you know who he is, which I doubt, is telling the gods about his fool son in person by this time." He looked about swiftly, and then decided. "Two of you men"—to the soldiers—"remain here. The rest of you

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come with me. And if this *ne-san*-faced innkeeper tries running, I will give two yen gold to the man who shoots him."

"I will not run," Konohako said. "Why should I?"

He saw no reason why he should. The affair was advancing by clockwork, which pleased Konohako's ingenious mind.

Again he led the way.

"Stop when you come to the room," the officer ordered. "The room the second white man *was* in."

"Yes, your highness."

The officer glanced angrily at Konohako, but the other's face was a mask of humility.

"This is the room," Konohako said.

Motöori's high cackle:

"See how his thoughts change as his age increases! He is considering at last what youth never thinks about. What is your opinion? Are we not agreed—"

"Enter!"

"There is our white man," Konohako said timidly. "Did I lie?"

"You are a fool!" the officer shouted, having run out of elaborate words. "That is the oldest, laziest, most beggarly white man in Osaka, and properly in his right place here. The murderer was a German spy, but this old—"

"Ask him," Konohako whispered, "what country he comes from."

"Am I doing this, or are you?" The officer shot out his under lip. Konohako, it was plain to be seen, knew too much. "What is your original place of residence, old man?"

One-Armed George said tonelessly—

"Germany."

The officer started. Who could tell what was what in a time like this? One never knew what might happen next. Perhaps the German spy had hired this derelict to do the actual killing.

"Were you ever in the army?" he demanded.

"Once," George admitted.

"You were? Why have you not reported to the police as you should?"

George said steadily:

"I am an old man. What is all this to me?"

"That I do not know," the officer said. "However, we will find out before long."

"Good," Motöori wheezed. "I do not like these riddles."

"And who are you?"

Motöori gave his name, and the officer bowed.

"I have heard your name," he said gently. "Once you did a great deed of honor."

"It was nothing. But what do you want of my friend?"

The officer dissembled—

"Did you sleep last night, Motöori-san?"

"Yes. Why?"

"While you slept, could this *seiyo-jin* have left you?"

"Possibly. Why, again?"

"A man was murdered here last night."

Motöori's blind eyes traveled unerringly toward his son.

"I do not doubt that," he said sternly.

Konohako was shuffling at random about the room, and exclaimed suddenly—

"A needle in the matting!"

He stooped, running his hand over the matting-floor, and found the raised lump.

"Something is under here. Is it yours, father?"

"Am I a rabbit or a squirrel? No!"

"Something stuck me here," Konohako insisted.

"Whatever it was, leave it alone," the officer shouted. "I will myself examine it —*haiya!* but you have a tender skin if wadding of cotton will puncture it!"

"He always was a delicate lad," Motöori stated placidly.

One-Armed George made a noise in his throat which passed unnoticed. He himself had been on the verge of saying that Konohako had evidently expected to find something, in finesse he was certainly not Motöori's equal. The less he said the better in this game.

The officer, at large, blinked, and then said to George—

"You admit that you killed the white man?"

"What white man? I have never seen one here!"

"That is true," Motöori seconded. "I am blind, you see, but I can hear every sound. A cockroach on the roof will awaken me. If a man was killed last night, my friend had nothing to do with it. *Mah!* Since when do soldiers and officers attend to police business?"

"This is not police-business, Motöori-san. It is government business. The dead man was—well, he has been murdered by the enemies of Japan. Is not that enough?"

Motöori seemed to shrivel and grow more wrinkled.

"More than enough," he said.

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"And this white man here, being German, being a member of our enemies' army, assuredly had a hand in the killing. I am a soldier, Motöori-san; I do not understand all this. Your son's part—what was it? Is he innocent? It appears that he is. Even my small intelligence, however, tells me that this German here would have disappeared after doing what he did, if he were guilty. Is that not so?"

"Unless," Konohako suggested, "he was very drunk—which was the case. As a matter of fact I feared something was wrong, and I, myself, saw to it that the one glass he drank, after he came from the room of the dead man, contained that which made him desirous of sleep. Was that not well done?"

"Yes," the officer said. "Provided it is true. This is too much for me. I was sent to succor the dead man. He is dead. So much I know. Now I will leave four of my men here, and return for orders. None of you will leave the inn."

"Those are words of wisdom," Motöori agreed. "It is indeed a complicated matter."

The officer disposed his men; two in the inn-room, one outside Motöori's door, and, after an investigation of the place, decided to have the other three patrol the outside, returning to headquarters alone. Before he finally left Motöori asked if permission would be given Konohako to come into the room for a few words; the officer expressed his willingness.

"He might as well remain here, then," Motöori said. "I have a few family matters which need discussion."

When the three—father and son and white man—were by themselves, Motöori looked everywhere save at his offspring. At last he said—

"It is plain that there will be none to worship my name when I am gone."

"Have I not been a dutiful son?"

"*Hoi!*" Motöori said in disgust. Then, in a steady undertone, "If you had died when you were born, Konohako, it would have been better for us all. I say this: you would betray our country, you would betray our friend—my friend, for you do not understand what the word means—and as for honor, you have none. Now, Konohako, when did this other German depart? The one who did the killing?"

Konohako said at once—

"Last night."

"Too glib, my son. If that were true, you would have taken time before replying. By the seven horns of Jizo, I believe your accomplice is still about! I do. Well, you have done it this time, Konohako! I do not know all the details, and I do not want to. Well—you are assuredly guilty!"

Konohako smiled gently—

"But you, my father, will say nothing of it!"

"No. That is forbidden. Now, *ani san*"—to George—"get what you hid last night, and also that which contains it."

One-Armed George brought the sword and dirk.

"The white man will be your second," Motöori said. "I myself will assist him, since there is no other man of honor about. Go and change your attire, Konohako. Your finest kimono, and see to it that the under-kimono is white and pure. Bring also a little bucket for your head."

Konohako laughed.

"My father," he said, "if it were not unfilial, I would say that you spoke like a fool!"

"Possibly. You *would* say that. But there is no other way out for you, Konohako."

"Then I will stay in!"

KONOHAKO became gay, and, with that, explanatory:

"Understand, my father, that your son is certainly not a fool. It is all simple. The second *seiyo-jin* is, as you guessed, concealed in the inn. I am going to have him searched out, and, in the scuffle, I believe he may be—hurt. And then Konohako, already paid by the Germans, for removing a wise and dangerous Englishman, who knew too many spies, will be considered as a hero! I may even receive a medal or two! I will be rewarded for capturing a spy who murdered one of our allies' men."

"Unless I tell what I know."

"That you can never do!"

"I am still able to talk," One-Armed George suggested.

"None will believe you. You yourself are in trouble: you will both—you and the other German—be considered friends."

"Make the preparations," Motöori commanded. "I am sick to death of talk."

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Konohako's laugh bubbled out. It was answer enough.

"Get out!" the old Japanese screamed, so violently that the patrolling soldier stuck his head inside to see what the matter was.

Konohako, still laughing, went.

The two old men faced one another.

"There is no time to lose," Motöori said fiercely. "Konohako is right! I may not betray my son. But, old friend, I have my own honor to consider, and, in caring for it, I shall point a finger at Konohako which will tell every one the truth. Come closer. What do you know about *seppuku—hara-kiri?*"

"What do I know? Enough to say that it must be an unpleasant way of leaving the world!"

"That is a matter of opinion. We cannot do the thing properly, but we will do the best we can. We have no white-bound matting, no white curtains, no flying flags embroidered with quotations from the sacred books, but we must use what we have. Where did I enter the room? Yes, the last panel to the—south? I suppose so. Good. We will call that the door of the the Practice of Virtue, as is prescribed, and we will call the door near the cupboard the door of the Warm Basin, since it is nearest the kitchen. We also have only one light—does it burn, my friend?"

George, heart choking him, said—

"It burns."

"Now lay a quilt before me. Spread it out. Take the whitest one, if you can find such a thing. Another one, also; lay it above. That is done?"

"It— I can not hurry with my one arm, Motöori-san—there, it is done."

"Good. The blood should not soak through to the matting. I wish that devil Konohako had brought a bucket! Empty the brazier, *ani san.* It must serve for my head. This is all very improper, but it must do. It is not according to the best practise: even a criminal would be entitled to object, but we can not help that. Now I shall explain your part."

George said angrily:

"I will have no part! This is insanity, Motöori-san! I will not permit you to kill yourself!"

"I am not going to! That is your part!"

"Then it goes no farther. I do not even like this talk of killing. I will have nothing to do with it."

Motöori began to speak as one would to a wayward child, in a wheedling voice—

"There is no other way for me, in honor, my friend. There is none but you to help me. I am blind. Alone. Customs differ in different lands, but here is the only way out for me. My days are done. Let me go in honor, that my soul and the soul of my ancestors will have peace. It is distasteful to you, but—you do me the greatest favor a man can do another. According to my son, to that officer, your country and mine are no longer friendly, but what difference does that make to us? We are old. I say truthfully when I say that nothing is left but honor—would you have a blind old man lose that?"

"I lost mine—years ago," George said.

"Through your own fault?"

"No!"

"Has it been pleasant?"

George's answer came instantly—

"It has been terrible."

"And you would condemn me, in my last few years, to that same horror?"

One-Armed George said meekly—

"What shall I do, my friend?"

"That is better! We must hurry. Listen closely. You are to hand me the dirk—it should be on a tray, but, since I am blind, give it to me in my hand. Then stand to one side of me, with the sword in your hand. I must"—his thin old lips seemed perfectly white, but never trembled, nor did his voice shake— "I must take the dirk, make an incision in my belly, and then draw the blade from left to right. I will keep my head bent forward—and you, old friend, will strike off my head and place it in the emptied brazier."

"I have but one hand—"

"Strike well with it! My old neck is thin; the sword is keen. It needs little force."

"I—might miss—"

"Have you ever used a sword?"

"Too well!" George muttered. "But," he added, "never like this."

"Remember, also, that you must not pick up my—the head with the sword-point. That would be disrespectful. Simply lay it on the brazier—it would be better to tear a few sheets from a book for my—it—to rest upon—and then, when the officer returns with others, say—

"Motöori is dead—with honor."

The white man thought out one final objection.

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"Suppose Konohako says that you died because you killed the white man?"

"He may try to say it, but it will do him no good. Time is going. Where are the spread quilts? Here? Good. Tuck the sleeves of my kimono—there is not time for me to dress as I should, and I doubt if I have a good kimono remaining—tuck them under my feet as I kneel, that I do not fall backward. Strike fairly, *ani sanl* I will not care, but when a head hangs even by a little flesh, it is not pleasant for *you* to see. I will pray the gods to make your arm sure."

"I—I can not!"

"You must. You are my only friend. You will not fail me?"

"There is no other way?"

"None! Good-by, old friend. The little bowl is yours. I would want you, and not Konohako, to have my family sword. *Haiya!* I have been very weary all these years, and at last—in honor—I may die. My doll-faced son had not the courage—or —now, you have the sword ready? Hand me the dirk—no, wait—there, I have my kimono opened to the skin—hand it to me, and then, when you have the sword picked up—stand to the side of me, and say, 'Good-by, old friend', and, at that signal, we will have the business complete—"

GEORGE of the single arm found that his fingers trembled, and that, infectously, his whole body began to shake. He drew the dirk from the scabbard of the sword, pulled out the longer weapon also. In a daze he handed Motöori the *wakizashi*, and the ancient Japanese' fingers tightened about George's own.

"Be of good heart," Motöori whispered.

George did not think what might happen to himself after the completion of the harakiri. There was, he saw, no way out of the old Japanese' dilemma, and that the ancient looked to George to act as his only confidant. He mumbled his lips together, avoided looking—until he must—at Motöori's bent, awaiting neck, and then gripped the sword tightly in his one hand.

He said—

"Good—"

Stopped, the sword half raised.

Had he heard something? What? He raised the sword higher, his eyes wide and staring, while Motöori waited for the completed signal.

He *had* heard something. *Um Gotteswillen, was?* That fiend of a son, laughing. Where? Had Motöori heard? If so the other gave no sign. The Japanese' body was taut, expectant—

Where? Behind him. In the room? No. In another.

George neighed like a stallion, made one wild spring backward, and drove his sword in a great arc through the panel, unmindful of Motöori's squeal of excited protest at the interruption; the sword stuck in the wooden frame of the panel.

Konohako's voice, yelling—

"He tries to murder my honored father! Help!"

George yanked at the sword, but never had opportunity for a second and less futile blow, for Konohako burst from the next room, searing George's side with a knife. The one-armed man lost balance and went down, to squirm around in time to see Konohako, a dirk in hand, attempt what George had been so reluctant to do—the blind man had, also, turned, and looked questioningly up. At the instant several panels of the corridor were jerked open George flung himself snakelike along the floor and jerked at Konohako's foot; the son, intent on completing his filial labor before witnesses entered, stumbled, fell, and Motöori's dirk, held tightly upward before the old man's belly, took Konohako in the throat.

"Always a moment late," the little officer yelped, pulling Konohako away from the old Japanese.

"What—what—" Motöori mumbled, his face chalkwhite.

"I did not depart," the officer said. "Konohako was permitted to go about his duty in the inn, but we watched him more closely than he knew. *Mah!* We have everything that we want! Konohako figured that he was suspected, perhaps, and turned traitor. The other *seiyo-jin* he tied securely, thinking to take credit to himself. But we did not realize that he feared what you two might know or guess, or we would never—"

"You spoke in the past tense," Motöori whispered.

"It is my duty to inform you that you are correct, Motöori-san."

"Who—"

George put a finger over his lips, pointed to the dirk still in Konohako's throat, and, on tiptoe, took two steps and —eyes closed

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—removed it, laying it on the floor near Motöori.

"You were not very friendly, *ani san*," he said then. "I fell over you, in the excitement, and you managed to stick me a bit—"

Motöori sighed in relief.

"Yes," the officer said promptly, "it was necessary for one of my men to—"

"I understand," Motöori said. "I blame you none."

"Thank you," the officer said, bowing. "Now we have much to do. Unless I am mistaken, you, *danna-san*"—to George—"may do as you wish. I will see that you are registered. We have another unregistered enemy here, and I say that Konohako did a good job of tying him, who will not find matters so entirely to his taste. Bring him along, men. He is in that next room—"

Two soldiers carried out the burly figure which, George knew now, was the one which had accompanied Konohako into their room during the night. Without interest, he looked at the bound man, and then, very slowly, his frame became very erect.

"*Ach du lieber!*" he grunted.

Before he could say more Motöori said—

"If you will assist as the assistant to my second, honorable soldier, I will complete what is needful to retain my honor, and expiate what my—son—has done."

"I am very sorry, but we must get the Emperor's permission, since it is now a state matter," he was told, and, from the officer's placid countenance, George did not believe such permission would be forthcoming.

"Now," the officer concluded, "if you will tell me your name, *danna-san*, I will see that you are properly registered. An honorable and noble gentleman, who has befriended a Japanese noble—"

"You can not make that too strong," Motöori said loudly. "What he did, also, was done in friendship for me. Do not let it be said that he desired to thwart any scheme or plot or counterplot or whatever it was his country across the sea intended. He is a man of honor!"

"It shall be explained according to your words," the officer promised. "If the *danna-san* will give his name—"

One-Armed George looked down at the bound man carried by the soldiers, and, while the other white man's eyes slowly filled with surprize and became wide with mortification, George bowed stiffly from the waist.

"I had better write it," he said. The officer handed him a pencil and tiny memorandum-book. "A clean page. So." He winked at the captured man with just a hint of malevolence. "I have lost an arm, and so become half a man, unable to work; I lost my honor, but now I am asked for my name. I give it to you"—writing—"Ludwig Ernst George—you remember me, eh?—von Baumingen und zu Frieshof, who, for defending the reputation of his promised bride from his commanding officer, was, after a duel, so lied about that he was forced from home, to become a vagabond, a derelict, a beggar—"

"Well, at last, after all these hungry years, I have lived to see what I never expected to see!"

He looked grimly at his fellow-countryman, and then laughed noiselessly.

"Considering what I have gone through, you must forgive me that laugh," he said gravely, and then, as if his mirth was uncontrollable, laughed again. His eyes were wet when he stopped, but little humor was in them. "Motöori, friend of my heart, as soon as the room is cleared of what pollutes it, we will have opportunity to continue with our discussion, and, reading words of wisdom, forget what neither of us wishes to remember."

George knelt, tucking his feet under him, close to Motöori, who already chanted under his breath the first of the intricate Thousand Words of Perfume for the dead. The blind man reached out a shaking, tremulous hand; George took it instantly.

What the pressure of fingers told the two old men the officer could not possibly know, but he took with him, as he left behind his men, the notion that the two, handclasped still, were smiling.

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THE CAMP FIRE

A Meeting Place for Readers, Writers and Adventurers

Our Camp-Fire came into being May 5, 1912, with our June issue, and since then its fire has never died down. Many have gathered about it and they are of all classes and degrees, high and low, rich and poor, adventurers and stay-at-homes, and from all parts of the earth. Some whose voices we used to know have taken the Long Trail and are heard no more, but they are still memories among us, and new voices are heard, and welcomed.

We are drawn together by a common liking for the strong, clean things of out-of-doors, for word from the earth's far places, for man in action instead of caged by circumstance. The *spirit* of adventure lives in all men; the rest is chance.

But something besides a common interest holds us together. Somehow a real comradeship has grown up among us. Men can not thus meet and talk together without growing into friendlier relations; many a time does one of us come to the rest for facts and guidance; many a close personal friendship has our Camp-Fire built up between two men who had never met; often has it proved an open sesame between strangers in a far land.

Perhaps our Camp-Fire is even a little more. Perhaps it is a bit of leaven working gently among those of different station toward the fuller and more human understanding and sympathy that will some day bring to man the real democracy and brotherhood he seeks. Few indeed are the agencies that bring together on a friendly footing so many and such great extremes as here. And we are numbered by the hundred thousand now.

If you are come to our Camp-Fire for the first time and find you like the things we like, join us and find yourself very welcome. There is no obligation except ordinary manliness, no forms or ceremonies, no dues, no officers, no anything except men and women gathered for interest and friendliness. Your desire to join makes you a member.

HOW about the derivation of the word "junk" used for a vessel? H. Bedford-Jones of our writers' brigade is questioned as to the derivation stated in one of his stories.

I have read with much enjoyment the story entitled "The White-Tailed Dragon." It seems to me, however, that your author is highly incorrect in his derivation of the word "junk." This word is not at all due to the Portuguese, and I am inexpressibly surprised to come upon such an error in *Adventure*.

Juan Serano, writing of Sumatra at the beginning of the 16th century, says: "They navigate with vessels made of a certain wood which looks like canes; they call them *juncos* in the Malay language."

The old word for ship in Chinese is "*po*." In 1413 the Ming emperor, Yung-lo, sent out a huge fleet on an exploring expedition. The interpreter attached was one Ma Huan, who wrote a book about 1430 entitled "Ying yai shenglan," a "Description of the Ocean Coast." He first uses the word *tsung* for ship, simply transcribing it from the Malay *djong*. So there, briefly, is the whole history of the word.

However, be comforted. *L'Illustration* fell into the same error about a year ago, Portuguese and all, so there may be some common basis for it.—H. A. KEYES.

THE Standard Dictionary gives the derivation as from Spanish "junco" from Malay "ajong" or Javanese "jung," a large book.

IN SPEAKING at Camp-Fire of some Americanization work I said the American Legion and such organizations would do well to take notice. I spoke in ignorance. I'm

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sorry I was ignorant but glad I spoke, since by so doing one of you called me as to the Legion (with the result that I wrote direct to Legion headquarters and got full details) and a representative of the Veterans of Foreign Wars came to the office and enlightened me as to the Americanization work being done by that organization.

Apparently the work these two bodies are doing is not much better known to the general public than it was to me. Only one of you spoke up—about the Legion only, and heaven knows you are generally quick enough to call me when you see me make a mistake. Their work should be known by everybody, profited by and aided.

'At my request Jno. W. Caulfield sent me a statement of the V. F. W. work written expressly for Camp-Fire-Fire by the Director of its Eastern Division:

New York City.

As a post-war undertaking worthy of it's best traditions, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States have inaugurated a campaign for the Americanization of the aliens in America. Already, in several cities the campaign is under way and is meeting with tremendous success.

Our Americanization program calls for the cooperation of every patriotic true-blooded American. The plan is educational in that by it we aim to distribute, through the industrial and manufacturing concerns, patriotic American documents. These documents include the Declaration of Independence; the Constitution; Lincoln's Bixby Letter and Gettysburg Address; Washington's Farewell Address; John Adams' Inaugural Address; Patrick Henry's Orations; Hale's "Man Without A Country"; Franklin's Essays; Hubbard's "Message to Garcia," and three hundred more of the greatest stories of America, written in the main by either the makers of the history or by eye-witnesses or impartial commentators.

We plan to translate these documents into eighteen or more languages, for inasmuch as the alien invariably resides in a neighborhood where he is surrounded by his fellow countrymen and reads foreign language newspapers, we feel that we can best give him of the ideals of America in the language he reads.

Wherever our plan has been broached, to whomever it has been presented, it has met with unqualified endorsement. Legislators, judges, business and professional men, in fact all public-spirited citizens, acclaim it a step in the right direction.

We are going to make a profit in the distribution of these documents. They are to be sold to the manufacturers and industrial employers. The profits accruing to our organization will be devoted to the continuance of our Americanization campaign, to Hospitalization, Rehabilitation Service and the V. F. W. National Home.—Very truly yours, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS, Americanization Department, Alfred Monett Director, Eastern Division.

SOME of the booklets lie before me, neat pamphlets containing excellent meat. In addition a set of bound volumes is offered, "Great Epochs in American History"—American history presented in a unique way—as nearly as possible in original documents or in the words of men who helped make that history or were contemporary and authoritative observers. By way of sample here is a partial list of the contents of the first of the ten sections only, "forming a complete, continuous, and well proportioned narrative of our national existence—" "a work intended to create and foster a higher regard and reverence for the sacred traditions and ideals upon which this glorious Government is founded."

SECTION I

VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY AND EARLY EXPLORATIONS

DISCOVERIES BEFORE COLUMBUS
By Justin Winsor, and by Henry Wheaton, and from the "Saga" of Eric the Red.

THE DISCOVERY BY COLUMBUS
By Washington Irving and by Columbus himself.

THE BULL OF POPE ALEXANDER VI PARTITIONING AMERICA.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE MAINLAND BY THE CABOTS
By John A. Doyle and by Peter Martyr.

THE FIRST VOYAGE OF AMERICUS VESPUCIUS
Vespucius's own account.

THE SWEDES AND DUTCH IN NEW JERSEY
By Isreal Acrelius, provost of the Swedish congregations in America

THE FIRST ACCOUNT OF AMERICA PRINTED IN ENGLISH
By an anonymous writer.

THE DISCOVERY OF FLORIDA BY PONCE DE LEON
By Francis Parkman.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE PACIFIC BY BALBOA
By Manuel José Quintana and by Antonio Herrera.

THE VOYAGE OF MAGELLAN TO THE PACIFIC
By John Fiske.

THE DISCOVERY OF NEW YORK HARBOR BY VERAZZANO
Verazzano's own account.

CARTIER'S EXPLORATION OF THE ST. LAWRENCE
By John A. Doyle, and by Cartier himself.

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THE EXPEDITION OF CORONADO TO THE SOUTHWEST
Coronado's own account.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE MISSISSIPPI BY DE SOTO
By Francis Parkman and by one of De Soto's companions.

DRAKE'S VISIT TO CALIFORNIA
By one of Drake's companions.

HUDSON'S DISCOVERY OF THE HUDSON RIVER
By Robert Juet Hudson's secretary and mate.

MARQUETTE'S DISCOVERY OF THE MISSISSIPPI
Marquette's own account, and by Father Claude Dablon.

HENNEPIN'S DISCOVERY OF NIAGARA FALLS
By Father Hennepin himself.

LA SALLE'S VOYAGE TO THE MOUTH OF THE MISSISSIPPI
By Francis Parkman.

THIS set of bound volumes is intended largely for distribution to industrial concerns for the use of their employees, for gifts to individuals, libraries or organizations. The price is $69.50 plus express charges.

The separate pamphlets, printed in English and other languages, are sold at prices within the reach of all.

Address Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Americanization Department, Transportation Building, Chicago.

It is a good work, though of course only one step of many to be taken in solving the big problem of Americanization—Americanization of native as well as foreign born.

At a later Camp-Fire we'll have a look at the work being done along these lines by the American Legion.

PERHAPS by the time you read this you will have met your old friends *Magpie* and *Dirty Shirt* on the screen. Anyhow Universal is going to put them there. In fact, there's going to be a whole series of W. C. Tuttle pictures featuring these two out-of-luck but well-meaning cowboys, pictures made from the following stories most of which appeared in our magazine: "Weaved by Warner," "Ajax for Example," "Wise Men and a Mule," "Eggs-Actly," "When the Pilgrims Hit Pipe Rock," "Creepin' Tintyses," "Between Pike's Peak and a Pickle," "Fade Away Foster," "A Cinch for the Gander," "The Proof of Progress," "Upside Down and Backwards" and "Ike Harper's Historical Holiday."

As at present planned Ben Corbett, who I'm told has won contests at various rodeos and roundups, is to play *Dirty Shirt*, and Gilbert Holmes, former cowpuncher, will impersonate *Magpie*.

YES, it's some stiff game, trying to catch Hugh Pendexter in a slip in his historical facts, but one of you has gone and done it. Some one ought to establish a foundation to make possible the awarding of a prize to any one at any time who catches Hugh Pendexter in any kind of slip in the historical fact and color of his stories. As editor I should mourn over any slip in our magazine but, being human in spite of being an editor, I can't help a reprehensible chuckle instead of a proper groan. Mr. Pendexter is so doggoned sure and dependable that, if I didn't know him personally and didn't find more than accuracy in his stories, I'd put him down as some kind of wholly unhuman machine that couldn't make a mistake if it tried.

I think maybe he chuckled himself. Anyhow he's a good sport, acknowledges the corn, offers no alibi and says thank you.

Kansas City, Missouri.

It's a great indoor sport, trying to find something wrong with Hugh Pendexter's historical facts, but not having sprouted wings or developed a halo, he has slipped, only a little to be sure, but a slip just the same.

I HAPPEN to be one of a slightly "daft" tribe called a Numismatist, and when in "Pards" he mentioned "the private mint of Gruber and Clark" (page 84, May 30th), he touched on a theme of which I have some knowledge.

He has the name slightly garbled. The correct firm name was "Clark, Gruber & Co."

The first sentence in Chapter One sets the time of the opening of the story as the summer of 1862. In the same paragraph in which he mentioned the private mint he said that they (the mint) were coining ten to fifteen thousand dollars a day. Pendexter is mistaken there. They were not coining in the summer of 1862 nor are any specimens of their coinage dated 1862 known to exist.

I enclose a copy of an article which appeared in the April, 1920, number of the *Numismatist*, the publication of the American Numismatic Association. The New York Public Library has no doubt a file of the *Numismatists*. Any of the statements can be verified by reference to any of the regular coin dealers.

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ANY of these Clark, Gruber & Co. gold-pieces are very rare and command high prices, some varieties more than others, of course. The reason for their scarcity being that they were practically all melted up and recoined in regular United States gold. The ten- and twenty-dollar pieces particularly netting the remelters a handsome profit, as they were of pure gold.

I am also enclosing a couple of leaves from a coin buying list, showing the known varieties of Colorado Pioneer gold coins, and a cut of the 1860 $20 Clark, Gruber & Co. piece. The dealer whose list this is might be accused of trying to "gyp" the unsuspecting person who offered him one of these pieces. Less than a month ago one of the very few complete sets of Clark, Gruber & Co. coins in existence, was sold at auction and realized the following prices.

$20, 1860, $625; $20, 1861, $245; $10, 1860, $65; $10, 1861, $21; $5, 1861, $15; $2.50, 1861, $14.

Of course these private gold coins were still in circulation for several years after Clark, Gruber & Co. and other private mints ceased their coinage. Attached is the copy of the article from the *Numismatist*.—E. S. THRESHER.

Here are some selections from the article in the *Numismatist* of April, 1920:

The Clark, Gruber & Co. building is standing today with but little change in its exterior appearance. The interior has been remodeled to meet the requirements of the present tenant. It is now in the center of the wholesale produce and commission district, and far from the financial section of the city of Denver. The presses are a part of the exhibits in the Colorado State Historical Society.

The names of Austin M. and Milton E. Clark, brothers, and E. H. Gruber, who composed the firm, are spoken of today as symbolic of honesty and full worth, as were their gold coins made in the early days of Colorado.

THE Clark brothers came from Ripley, Ohio, and Gruber from Hagerstown, Maryland. They met in Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1858 and entered the banking business there, in the course of which they became acquainted with the Denver country through the gold-dust and nuggets received from that section. Very soon they conceived the plan of establishing a bank at Denver, also a mint where gold-dust could be converted into coin. In this way, as they estimated, the cost of transportation across the plains could be eliminated. Late in 1860 a branch bank was established in Central City.

THE comparatively few pioneers who came to the Pike's Peak region in 1858 brought little money with them, and had need of little; but the gold discoveries in the spring of the following year brought a sudden and what developed into a more or less steady influx of seekers after wealth, and introduced the use of gold-dust and nuggets into the transactions of business. This practise was a nuisance in small dealings. The use of small scales with troy weights was the only manner of counting this gold-dust money. Nuggets and retorts were rubbed on a stone resembling a whetstone, and the color compared with the rubbings from test pieces of known fineness, and their value was in this way determined.

In the more extensive transactions the weighing of gold could be accomplished with sufficient exactness to guarantee comparative fairness to both sides, but in minor dealings, to wit, the purchase of a drink of whisky or a snack of food, the weighing process was not only a nuisance but generally resulted in the "gypping" of the customer.

Much of the placer or fine flour gold contained quantities of black sand or magnetic iron, but this could be easily cleaned by the use of the magnet.

THIS state of affairs called for the services of men who would make a special business of buying crude gold at its value as ascertained by reasonably accurate methods and paying for it in definite money of some kind. It resulted in July, 1860, in the establishment of the Clark, Gruber & Co. mint and bank, Denver's first financial institution.

The new project crystalized at Leavenworth when the firm, which had been buying gold from the Pike's Peak region and paying the express company enormous sums for its transportation across the plains under heavy guard, decided it could operate at a much greater profit by establishing itself in the heart of the gold country.

The company bought property at Sixteenth and Blake Streets, put up what at that time was one of the most ornate buildings in the city, and brought equipment in the shape of dies and presses all the way from Boston. All supplies and manufactured articles came by ox or mule team from Missouri River points under heavy guard from Indian attacks.

The first coins minted in the new institution were $10 and $20 pieces of pure gold. They were equal in weight to the coins of the same denomination issued by the Government, but of greater value because of the fact that they contained no alloy.

In a period of less than two years the new mint put into circulation approximately $3,000,000 of its product, which was gladly accepted at par everywhere in Colorado. With the increased output of the mines and placer claims, the enterprise promised to outrival the Government's own mints, and then arose a discussion as to the propriety of the coinage of money by a private firm. In the summer of 1861 the first territorial convention of the Republican party was held at Golden, Colorado, and among its resolutions was one declaring for the necessity of a Government mint at Denver. Clark, Gruber & Co., conscious of some technical impropriety in their mintage, heartily indorsed the movement and became, in fact, chiefly instrumental in bringing it to a favorable conclusion.

In the autumn of the same year the Secretary of the Treasury urged upon the President that the existing coinage laws be so amended as to prohibit private coinage, and that a branch Government mint be established in Denver, and that authority be given for the purchase of the property of Clark, Gruber & Co., and its conversion to Government use. A bill was introduced in Congress embodying the Secretary's suggestions regarding the establishment of a branch mint in Denver, and it became a law in April, 1862. It was the intent of this law to continue the Clark, Gruber & Co. mint as a coining institution, but "circumstances and influences" growing out of the astounding silver production of the Comstock Lode in Nevada resulted in legislation establishing the mint at Carson City.

After its purchase by the Government the old

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plant was used as a financial building, being an assay office for the purchase of bullion and a depository for public funds. The accounts of the Government disbursing officers in this part of the country were kept there until a national bank was organized and became a Government depository.

And here is Mr. Pendexter's frank admission of the error:

Norway, Maine.

Mr. E. S. Thresher has done me right in the eye. And he does me a service in pointing out my error. I dislike alibis. I cite the following excerpt from R. G. Dill's "History of Lake County, Colorado," not as a defense but as an example of how a man can make a slip if he is not constantly on guard and checks all his innumerable "facts": p. 336 (E. H. Gruber's biog.). "—he went to Leavenworth, Kansas, at which city he founded the banking house of Clark, Gruber & Co., a branch of which was opened in Denver during the Pike's Peak excitement of 1859. Mr. Gruber looking after its interests in that place. The house met with great success. It was then Mr. Gruber conceived the idea of coining gold and stamping it with the firm name. Finding no law prohibiting the same, the firm erected a mint and forthwith commenced to coin money, at the rate of $10,000 to $15,000 a day. This coin was circulated throughout all business portions of Colorado, and it proved of great assistance in trade, and was recognized at par at all times. In 1863 the mint was purchased by the United States Government for $25,000. Their firm closed business in Denver in 1864 and Mr. Gruber returned to Kansas."

HAD I bothered to check up with Hollister's, "The Mines of Colorado," which I consulted much in building the yarn, I would have noted the mint was bought in 1862. In a "History of Denver" (author's name not given, but Vickers, I believe), an act, providing for a mint in Denver is given as 1862, "but without any provision for coinage." I can't recall what mental processes at the time of writing the story prompted me to describe the private mint as turning out coins in 1862, unless I reasoned the firm kept at it until the Government took over the property "in 1863," the date given in Dill's history, or that the provision for the mint, without provision for coinage, permitted Clark, Gruber & Co. to continue. Quickest explanation is to say I "gummed" it. Mr. Thresher's correction will permit me to correct the script for book publication. And I thank him.—PENDEXTER.

HERE we are embarked upon another snake argument. If it gets into a deadlock we'll have to refer it to Dr. Lutz and have science pronounce the ultimate verdict. Is a snake's poison fatal to itself and do they commit suicide? It seems that the snake of the first letter may have died of the stone injury, not of its own venom.

Eugene, Oregon.

I was very much interested in what E. C. said in a recent number of *Adventure* about snakes biting themselves. "I was curious to see if the venom would affect them, but when finally I chopped off their heads, a half hour later, neither had seemed more agitated than snakes might be expected to after being pretty well hacked by a blunt machete."

FIVE years ago I was riding a pony up the Mount Lemon trail not far from Oracle, Arizona. I got off the pony and started crawling under a barbed-wire fence to look for an old bench-mark near by. While I was under the fence I heard a sudden whirr and saw a small side-winder rattler just in front of my hand getting ready to strike. I got out from under that fence mighty fast, tearing a gap in my shirt. Then I grabbed a few rocks and sticks and began shying them at the snake which began moving away, striking furiously at everything which came near it. I wasn't a very good shot but finally a big chunk of rock struck the snake in the middle and broke its back. After that the snake lost its power of propulsion, but it still continued to writhe and strike—as lively as ever—at the sticks which I now threw at it carelessly out of an idle desire to torment it. Finally the snake twisted and with what looked like a very deliberate act opened wide its flat jaws and closed them in a vise-like grip on its body about a third of the way down from the head. I could see the two long front teeth pierce its skin.

Now I had heard the cowboys say that a rattler, if tormented and unable to escape, would, in order to evade its tormentors, commit suicide by biting itself. So I waited around to see what would happen. I kept throwing a few harmless twigs at it. A few times the snake lunged at these, but its movements grew sluggish. After a few minutes I couldn't get a rise out of Mr. Snake, and later when I went over and stirred him with a stick he was just as dead as any dead snake I ever saw.—W. W. SNYDER.

IN THIS second letter, from Douglas M. Dold of our writers' brigade, is about as much information on snakes as can be crowded into so little space. I know that Camp-Fire's thanks go to Mr. Dold.

Astoria, Long Island, N. Y.

I have recently been hearing a file of *Adventures* read. The Camp-Fires have tremendously interested me. Note that there have been a number of references to snakes and it is on this subject that I may perhaps be able to shed a little light.

I SPENT a year or so in the Bronx Zoo, have studied reptiles in a fairly scientific way for years, have collected hundreds, handled a great many venomous and non-venomous. Before I lost my eyesight I collected in many parts of the world. Yet I feel that I know only a very little and I check most of my own observation upon data which I have in my library from such men as Harry Johnston, Boulanger, Vital Brazil, Rutledge, Ditmars, Naguchi, Lumholtz, Leo Miller, Lange.

There was a short article recently in *Adventure* having to do with a chap who found a couple of snakes on a ledge part way down a well. He calls them by their local name. I suppose they were fer de lance, at any rate they were viperine. He

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spoke of the reptiles biting and striking at themselves. Any snake will strike and chew at itself when terrified, angry or injured seriously. Their venom is not toxic to themselves or a snake of the same family or species. That is, in any but a mechanical way.

I once knew of a water moccasin killing a cobra. But these were snakes of a different family. Two snakes of different species both venomous may kill each other by their respective venom. However, the action is slow.

THERE are two non-venomous snake-eating snakes, one our common king snake, Ophibilus, and the other a South American snake spoken of by Roosevelt. I think it is the Mesurama. Both of these snakes kill by constriction and seem immune to toxin. Curiously both snakes are very mild natured toward man. I had several king snakes about for years. They seemed to like to be handled.

Snake venom differs tremendously in its action. The venom is a tox albumen whose exact nature defies analysis. It may be swallowed with immunity if the mucous membrane of mouth and throat be unabrazed. Viperine and crotaline venom "lakes" the blood. Causes the red blood corpuscles to break down. These the long-fanged type of usually thick-bodied snakes. Our poisonous snakes belong to this variety—copperhead, water moccasin and rattler. We have two coral snakes which belong to Elaps and are short fanged snakes related to cobras.

BRAZIL has many deaths by snake-bite. Due to rubber gathering and cattle industry. In the more or less open regions the snake that does the damage is the chrome rattlesnake. In the forest it is the bushmaster. Called by many names. Xeibo is one. It is a large gaudy snake with huge fangs. I've seen one fourteen feet long. It is the only viper of the new world that lays eggs. The rest are viviparous. This snake is usually sluggish but is at times pugnacious and very dangerous.

One finds it lying on bushes. It has a queer habit of striking at the last of a party who may be passing, not being irritated by the first disturber but getting more and more angry as the party passes. Bushmasters are said to incubate their eggs. I don't know whether or not this is so. You see, I'm barely indicating.

The fer de lance, called jacaraca, is numerous. Not so big. The longest I've seen was eight feet. Both snakes have long slender fangs which fold in a sheath in upper jaws just as do our rattler fangs. Both of these snakes are omnivorous feeders. Rats, cane rats, agoutis, etc. form large part of diet. One finds plenty of large coral snakes in South and Central America, also many palm vipers.

Snakes are nocturnal in their hunting as a rule. This is particularly true in the tropics.

SNAKE venom may be made much more toxic by allowing it to putrefy. Natives rarely use snake venom as a poison for arrows. I have heard that the Andaman Islander used snake venom on his darts and arrows and I know that the bushman at one time used snake venom, but for the most part they used a poison made of a Euphobia. In the Congo Strophanthus is used.

I've found that poisonous and non-poisonous snakes got out of my way if I gave them half a chance. In breeding season snakes are much more dangerous. This is particularly true of cobras. A cornered snake is always dangerous, and one which is either hurt or sick. They are terribly stupid creatures. A snake shedding his epidermis is always more dangerous. The eyelids of a snake have fused over the eye. That is why he is to all appearances lidless. When he is about to shed, these fused lids become opaque and he is blind, helpless and vicious because afraid of everything.

Australia has approximately forty-six species of snake. Of these forty-two or so are poisonous yet one does not hear of very many deaths by snake-bite. I mean authentic cases.

Africa has some bad snakes yet one doesn't hear of many deaths. Authentic cases. I think the mamba, the dendraspis, tree cobra either green or black is one of the most dangerous snakes I know of. It is nervous, vicious, hard to see and apparently fearless. Mamba, by the way, in Bganda means Lung Fish. The Masai have a vague kind of cobra worship. Cobras, not mambas, live in almost every old native hut thatch. They eat rats and bats. They seem goodnatured.

THE city of Boma came from a word "Bgoma" which meant snake. Just before one gets into gorge of Congo rapids to the south is a down country. Here live many rodents and on an island in the river is pelican rookery. Here is one of the snakiest places I ever knew. Untold number of puff-adders living in rodent burrows and great numbers of cobras. Puff-adders grow to a huge size in Calahari Desert. Rhino vipers, puff-adders and Gaboon vipers all closely akin. All sluggish and immensely fanged. Usually they live in rodent burrow or cavity in termite nest.

Boat-tailed banded sea snakes of hydrophinae family kill many fishermen in tropics. These snakes are highly venomous, live on fish, lead an aquatic life. Get into nets and kill many Malays.

Largest and most dangerous snake I have known anything of is king corbra. Naja Bungarus, Hamadryad. I forget the Malay word. They travel in pairs. Vary in color, as do cobras. Cobras from dry places are nearly white at times, whereas from swampy places nearly black. Same kind. In India snake-bite death rate given as nineteen thousand or more. This is due to the fact natives go barefooted and barelegged; to the nervous nature of krait and cobra the snakes taking biggest toll, and to the fact that the cobra haunts house clearings because of chickens and eggs. The Tic Polong or Russell's viper is the viper of India. It was the speckled band in Conan Doyle's story of the name. A cobra strikes down then munches or chews. Coral snakes chop sideways then munch. Vipers strike up, down, any way and actually fling their widely opened mouth at object to be struck. Often fangs are broken. They manufacture new fangs quickly, as many are to be found in various states of development.

SNAKES have a very peculiar odor which is much more evident at some times. Breeding season and hot summer months. I can usually spot presence of snake by odor. It is a rancid, pungent odor which has in it the hint of cucumbers, or so it seems to me. When the glands at each side of anal opening are cut one gets the odor very strongly. I've

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had it on my hands after working with snakes and been unable to get it off.

I don't believe any man could draw a gun one half or one tenth as quickly as a rattlesnake could strike. They do it much faster than the eye can follow.

All snakes are good swimmers. Fish often eat swimming snakes and I've heard of a rattler swimming a tidal creek being attacked by crabs and devoured. Snakes make good bait for pickerel and large-mouth bass. Most snakes should not be molested, as they destroy many pests. A black snake in the barn means there won't be any rats.

Poisonous snakes are utilized by only one tribe that I know of. On the Sotu, southern slopes of Ruenzori, the Bakonjo of primitive Bantu stock catch a big puff-adder and peg him by the tail in a buffalo trail. The snake is naturally angry and in pain. Strikes at the buffalos' bellies as they pass. The natives follow stricken beasts, cut out flesh immediately about fang punctures. I have not seen this but quote from Sir Harry Johnston's "Uganda."

I hope some of these odds and ends may be of interest. If not, at any rate my will was good.—DOUGLAS M. DOLD.

IN THIS issue we have the second of T. S. Stribling's *Poggioli* stories. As before mentioned, they are perfectly good detective stories—and perfectly good satires. Satires on almost everything—on detective stories, on *Poggioli*, on human nature in general. And yet, perfectly good detective stories.

THIS question of the extent to which the Bolshevists have wormed their men, not necessarily foreign born, into our Army and Navy. Another comrade speaks up.

Personally I do not believe this matter is any mare's-nest. There are many around our Camp-Fire who, being in Army or Navy, can add their bit of evidence one way or the other. Every bit helps. If Army and Navy are being undermined in this way, the more and more quickly public interest is aroused against the attempt, the better. If those responsible for the quality and reliability of our fighting personnel can not—or will not—ensure us against having our first line of defense secretly made ineffective by sapping from within, then other men had better be put in their places.

Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

I have just finished reading the June 30th number of our magazine and while sitting around the Camp-Fire I listened to our unnamed pal in the Army speak of the foreign element in the U. S. Army.

I AM a soldier and have been for years. I have been in Hawaii for quite a while, and in that time have seen a lot of foreigners in the service. At one time I was acting — of a Staff outfit here and we had men in that outfit that could not talk English. There are some of them there yet. When the roll was called it sounded like an outfit in the Cossacks.

These foreign-born are not only in the ranks, you can find them also in the first three grades, that is, Staff, Technical and Master Sergeants.

Of course these men may not be Reds, and again that may. We do not know. But there are some Reds in the Army. There were two of them tried here not long ago. I am enclosing a clipping from today's *Star Bulletin* that refers to the case. These men were tried on evidence that was found in the U. S. mails. They had written to the International Tribunal, or some such layout in Russia, asking to have a branch opened here.

As I am a soldier I must ask you not to use my name in case you use any of this letter in "Camp-Fire."—M. N. O.

MATTHEWMAN TO TAKE COMMUNIST CASES TO COURT

American Civil Liberties Union Retains Honolulan To Fight Army Sentences

(A. P. BY RADIO CORPORATION)

NEW YORK, May 27.—THE American Civil Liberties Union announced today that it has retained John A. Matthewman, Honolulu attorney and former attorney general of Hawaii, to take the cases of Paul Crouch and Walter Trumbull in the civil courts on the ground that their sentences by military court martial at Schofield Barracks were in violation of military law.

The sentences of 40 years against Crouch, and that of 26 years against Trumbull, were reduced by Maj. Gen. William R. Smith, commanding general of the Hawaiian division, to three years for Crouch and one year for Trumbull.

These cases have now gone to Washington, and the reduced sentences will not become effective until they have been approved by the board of review of the judge advocate general's department. This review will deal, among other things, with the legality of the entire procedure, including the sentences.

Army officials are also unable to see at present how the cases in question can be taken out of the hands of the military authorities turned over to the civil counter. The only ground they can think of is that the military court was without jurisdiction, and they hold that there is no question as to jurisdiction.

Crouch and Trumbull are in confinement at Schofield Barracks, where they will remain pending the outcome of the review at Washington.

A YEAR or two ago I suggested that the best way of settling the problem of Europe's financial indebtedness to the United States would be for us to collect what is owing to us, (for, on a business basis, it is a just debt) and then to give it back to our former allies as a free gift of friendship and brotherhood. Make it a helping, saving gift, not to governments, but to the peoples—to the wounded, the bereaved, the impoverished.

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That was an idealist idea. Yes, I am what is nowadays called an idealist, and proud of it. One reason I'm an idealist is that idealism is more practical than materialism. More practical, that is, if measured by the only possible test of practicality, namely, practical results. And that is a test that materialism, because of its very nature, must accept as final. Practical results are the sole test of success as measured by materialistic standards.

Take this matter of the European debt. But first I must admit that my suggestion had one very weak point—the condition that we should first collect the money. That point was weak chiefly because it was not idealistic but a sop—I hope unconscious—to materialism and the kind of justice, honor and stubborn pride that are bred by materialism. I should have suggested that we make no attempt to collect but instead present to each of our former allies the amount it owes us, merely making very plain the spirit of the gift—that it was neither the admission of injustice in our claim on the one hand nor charity on the other, but a friend's willing gift to a friend who has suffered and who very bitterly needs that gift.

Silly, isn't it, materialists? *Yet I will wager you that, by the cold, hard, concrete tests of your own vaunted materialism itself, practical results, it would bring us more practical, material profit in the long run than any other course you can name or devise.*

You won't let it be tried, but go ahead with your "practical" method of collecting the money due us. Time and events will prove *your* method a very practical and very expensive failure, so terrible a failure that the day will come when most Americans will heartily wish we had forgiven the debt in the first place—had been idealistic.

I challenge you to that materialistic test of materialistic methods and theories.

A year from the day of this writing, June 26, 1925, look back and count up your practical gains from your methods. Two years from today. Five, ten, twenty years from today count it up, and curse your foolishness.

It is probable that you will never collect the whole of that debt, quite possible that you will never collect a great part of it. But, whether you collect or not, go ahead with this wonderful Dawes plan, or with any other plans you can devise, and measure the harvest you reap.

I can tell you of that harvest. Any other fool idealist can tell you. But you are too wise to listen—now. The harvest, sowed in shortsightedness and greed, reaped with haggling and hard business methods, will be a harvest brought you by hate, envy, covetousness, a harvest of hostility, of greed in return, very possibly of armed attack to take from us by force the wealth we have and they lack—organized destruction, legal rapine, systematic wholesale murder. For every material dollar we collect we shall pay with three. Or perhaps it will be the enemy from within who, thanks to the blindness of your greed, finds his chance to turn upon us and upon all the world the materialistic weapon of force, the materialistic principle of get what you can because you can. Look back a year from now—five, ten, twenty years from now—and see.

AND, instead, we might have said to a world rent by the great war, impoverished in wealth and man-power, hating and sorely afraid, "Let us *have* brotherhood and friendship. Money? We have, you lack. Because of that we give to you. Give as we would have you give to us in like case. Our world is at crisis; civilization must go sharply one way or the other, up or down. Up means peace on the only foundation upon which lasting peace can be builded—friendship, cooperation, brotherhood. We now lay the first stones of that foundation."

Your hands, O materialists, can clutch no quick dollars by laying that foundation. And your brains can grasp no understanding of the future dollars, saved or gained, it would mean. Still less can you measure the bigger values it would bring.

So go on with your Dawes plan, your business and diplomacy. And as the years roll on, look back.—A. S. H.

SERVICES TO OUR READERS

Lost Trails, for finding missing relatives and friends, runs in alternate issues from "Old Songs That Men Have Sung."

Old Songs That Men Have Sung, a section of "Ask Adventure," runs in alternate issues from "Lost Trails."

Camp-Fire Stations: explanation in the second and third issues of each month. Full list in second issue of each month.

Various Practical Services to Any Reader: Free Identification Card in eleven languages (metal, 25 cents); Mail Address and Forwarding Service; Back Issues Exchanged; Camp-Fire Buttons, etc., runs in the last issue of each month.

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Ask Adventure

A Free Question and Answer Service Bureau of Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere and Upon the Various Commodities Required Therein. Conducted for *Adventure* Magazine by Our Staff of Experts.

QUESTIONS should be sent not to this office, but direct to the expert in charge of the section in whose field it falls. So that service may be as prompt as possible, he will answer you by mail direct. But he will also send to us a copy of each question and answer, and from these we shall select those of most general interest and publish them each issue in this department, thus making it itself an exceedingly valuable standing source of practical information. Unless otherwise requested inquirer's name and town are printed with question; street numbers not given.

When you ask for *general* information on a given district or subject the expert may give you some valuable general pointers and refer you to books or to local or special sources of information.

Our experts will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections, subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. These experts have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a given commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

1. **Service free to anybody, provided self-addressed envelop and *full* postage, *not attached*, are enclosed. (See footnote at bottom of page.) Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union. Be sure that the issuing office stamps the coupon in the left-hand circle.**

2. **Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.**

3. **No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.**

4. **Make your questions definite and specific. State exactly your wants, qualifications and intentions. Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.**

5. **Send no question until you have read very carefully the exact ground covered by the particular expert in whose section it seems to belong.**

Please Note: To avoid using so much needed space each issue for standing matter and to gain more space for the actual meat of "Ask Adventure" the full statement of its various sections and of "Lost Trails" will be given only in alternate issues. In other issues only the bare names of the sections will be given, inquirers to get exact fields covered and names and addresses from full statement in alternate issues. Do *not* write to the magazine, but to the editors of the sections at their home addresses.

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4—6. Islands and Coasts. In Three Parts
7, 8. New Zealand and the South Sea Islands. In Two Parts
9. Australia and Tasmania
10. Malaysia, Sumatra and Java
11. New Guinea
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13—18. Asia. In Five Parts
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H—J. Aviation, Army and Navy Matters
K. American Anthropology North of Panama Canal
L. First Aid on the Trail
M. Health-Building Outdoors
N. Railroading in the U. S., Mexico and Canada
O. P. Herpetology and Entomology
Standing Information

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Rattlesnakes

THE best way to exterminate them:

Request:—"In working for the protection of young pine forests from intentionally set fires in this area we find that a certain element defends its action on the ground that in thick cover rattlesnakes become numerous enough to be a public menace.

It is idle to discuss the rattlesnake with the ordinary man. We have them, of course. I know a man who has hunted and fished all his life without seeing one in the woods. I have myself hunted much and fished a great deal in this section, and have run across one. On the other hand we have lost several people in this county in twenty years from rattlesnake-bites, and a big fellow is brought to town every so often.

We have tried for a bounty without success. Now I am wondering if there be a more spectacular way, and am seeking your advice.

My information is that the mongoose is a successful snake-hunter and killer. Would it be feasible to import the mongoose for use on the diamond back, and the heart-back as well, as a ferret is used on rats and other vermin?

If feasible it can be put over as a sporting proposition partly and partly as a constructive project. Is the importation of the mongoose forbidden as a possible pest; if so, could it be evaded by importing only males for a specific purpose?

A reasonable expenditure would be justified for publicity purposes alone as it would make more forest protection talk in our own county than we can get otherwise.

Kindly give your opinion on the feasibility of the matter. I have seen a cur dog trained to hunt the rattler and bay him. If the mongoose will do his own killing any countryman will note where a rattler crosses the road and come hotfoot to town to get the killer. Thanking you for the courtesy of a reply, I am, yours very truly."—GEO. D. LOWE, Secy. Appling County Chamber of Commerce, Baxley, Georgia.

Reply, by Dr. Noble:—"I have been away from the Museum on a short vacation and am sorry not to have answered your letter before this time. I have recently received a great many *Adventure* letters, but never a more worthy one than yours or one which is more difficult to answer satisfactorily.

I can dispose of part of your letter very quickly but the solution itself is another matter. The mongoose has been tried as a snake exterminator in many countries, for instance Guadalupe, Jamaica, Martinique, etc. In all of these places, he has taken to destroying all kinds of animal life, such as native birds, small mammals, and even chickens. Nor has he been found effective in exterminating the poisonous serpents.

As you know, there are many regions more afflicted than Georgia. In such places, two methods are usually employed in combating the danger. First, an organized method of collecting the reptiles and sending them to pounds. Second, the free distribution of rattlesnake serum, which is the only sure cure for snake-bite. At present this is rather difficult to obtain but in a short time it will probably be made available throughout the United States.

I can state very definitely that burning the country does not drive out the snakes nor do rattlesnakes seek dense shrubbery in the pine forests. Of course, it would be extremely difficult to convince the public that such conflagrations might not drive out an occasional snake and therefore do some good.

I think you have suggested the only solution possible; that is, to make a sporting proposition of snake-catching. There are doubtlessly many fellows in the neighborhood who could catch rattlers and if a certain amount of publicity were connected with it, an organization might be formed for the purpose. In the New York region for example, there is a society of over one hundred members who spend their week-ends catching poisonous snakes. They do this primarily for fun, because our own rattlesnake is not an exceedingly dangerous one. There is a certain thrill which goes with snake-catching and a certain amount of heroism which appeals to sporting blood.

Another method which has been employed is to discover the dens where the rattlers hibernate in winter in great numbers. These dens may be blown out with dynamite. Undoubtedly many of your woodsmen could locate such dens, as the chief ones around here are well known and visited each year by our reptile hunters. Perhaps the Chamber of Commerce could take a hand in organizing a society for the hunting of snakes and the blowing up of their dens. This may seem a slow and tedious process, but there is no more rapid method known at present.

Names and addresses of department editors and the exact field covered by each section are given in the next issue of the magazine. Do NOT write to the magazine itself.

Australasia

CHANCES for sheep and cattle ranching:

Request:—"I am planning on coming to Australia after I am discharged and starting a cattle ranch, and since you have so kindly volunteered to give information on that area I would like to know what the chances would be of making good.

Are their any local books there that deal with pastoral and other rural industries? A few other things I would like to have answered are:

Can firearms be carried or do the laws of N. S. W. prohibit them?

Is there any land in Australia today fit for grazing or ranching that is unoccupied?

Are cattle branded as in Argentina and the U. S.?

If you send this letter to Adventure magazine please omit name and address."— ——.

Reply, by Mr. Norman:—Delighted to assist you.

What we do not know about sheep and cattle ranching in Australasia would fill a book a mile long and a furlong deep. Sheep and cattle, also horses, as you Yankees say, are our particular meat.

Yes, you can certainly make good in these respects most anywhere in Australia. Cattle are dear just now. For example, a good fat steer on the hoof nets from £7 to £8. Retail, quality stuff runs up to 8d and 9d per lb.

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I shall send you some official books by an early mail dealing with the subject. Also consult the enclosed pamphlet compiled by myself. It will tell nearly all worth knowing concerning all the States. It also advises you what to do in the matter of passports.

Yes, firearms can be carried anywhere in Australia. A license fee costs 5 shillings per yr. In the case of the man on the land, the law is not very stringently enforced. Anyhow, there is no hardship in the matter.

Land can be leased or rented in different parts of Australia. In the Northern Territory the rent is merely nominal. But I recommend you to confine your attention either to this State or Queensland. With a little maneuvering you can secure what you require.

Cattle are branded here as elsewhere. The brands are registered with the Government and become the property of the person who records them.

You do not say how much money you will bring with you. Still, with a moderate sum at your disposal, you can start in a small way and gradually make good. Come! The prospect is good.

"Ask Adventure" service costs you nothing whatever but reply postage and self-addressed envelop.

The National Rifle Association

JOIN it!

Request:—"Would like a little information, know you have it, and that is why I am asking.

I would like to purchase a U. S. Springfield rifle for the purpose of having it restocked and made into a sporting rifle. If possible would want this rifle "star-gauged" and the base for the rear sight left off, and without any of the grooves being cut in the barrel to hold the rear sight base in place, think you understand, don't want any unsightly marks on the barrel, and it would not be necessary to purchase the stock or mountings other than the plate underneath the magazine and screws and the trigger guard and screws for same. In other words all that I would want is enough of the rifle to make an up-to date sporting rifle out of it. Have been a gun crank all my life, have spent several years in the National Guard as an officer and have used several of the better makes, especially one of Harry Popes' special-made barrels at the time he was connected with the Stevens Arms Co.

How would I go about purchasing this rifle and about what would the cost be?

Kindly give me all the information you can and any suggestions that you would care to make would be thankfully received. Fifteen or twenty years ago the Stevens Arms & Tool Co. were making some very fine target rifles. Are these manufactured any more? If so, by whom?

Thanking you in advance for any information you can give me and with stamped envelope enclosed for reply, I am, yours respectfully," ——.

If this letter is used for publication, *kindly omit name.*

Reply, by Mr. Wiggins:—In response to yours of the 23rd. inst., I'll gladly do what I may for you in the matter of a Springfield Sporter.

First, you must join the National Rifle Association, which every good American should do, anyhow; I enclose a blank application on which I have endorsed your application for membership. Select the one you desire but I recommend the Life Membership, at twenty-five dollars; having received your card, order through the Director of Civilian Marksmanship, a complete sporting model Springfield rifle, at a cost of around fifty dollars, the rifle having pistol-grip stock, short forearm, Lyman No. 48 receiver sight, and star-gauged bore.

Or you can purchase the rifle, National Match grade, the very best as regards action and boring, and after receiving it, send to the following man, who is a wonderful fellow at stocking them:

Mr. Shirley Hopper, 813 Pacific Ave., Alameda, California. He restocked my own Springfield, and as fine work as I ever saw, at thirty dollars, as I had the Lyman No. 48 sight on already.

I believe Stevens is not making the higher grades of target arms now, but my Ballard, relined by Hopper, put ten under the base of a .30 caliber bullet at twenty-five yards, and is good for a dollar group at a hundred in good hands, with good weather conditions. How's that?

If you don't want an answer enough to enclose FULL return postage to carry it, you don't want it.

Fawns at Play

AN INQUIRY from Bill Adams about an innocent little animal brings into print some bear and moose stories from innocent bear and moose hunters:

Request:—"I don't know a thing about game, beyond knowing the gopher and the buffalo when I see them. Yesterday, while coming up the first grade out of the Yosemite, I saw a little fawn run over the road just ahead of the car. He seemed to be a dark brown with whitish-gray mottles or spots. I was having to keep a good eye on the road just then and the flivver was boiling like fury, so did not get the best look at him. There were a number of high-powered busses not far astern of me, and I was trying to shew them how to climb a hill, eh?

The fawn was terrified of the flivver, more so than myself even. I never know when a flivver will buck. He stood broadside to me as I went by and appeared to me to be squealing with fright. He was very small. I have been wondering whether if he was some kind of deer that is rare in this neck of the woods, as I am of course tolerably familiar with the ordinary deer and its young. I presume he may have been crying for his dam. I suppose that had he been a grown up he would not have bawled as he did, but would have got away, on up into the brush.

I should like to know what he was, if my description is near enough to enable you to recognize him; for while I am horribly ignorant of game I am deeply interested in seeing them wild. Praps he was an antelope? The booklet descriptive of the park animals only mentions the mule tail deer.

THERE is an old cuss here who tells me that he once took a shot at a grizzly which he saw on the opposite side of a cañon, a sheer-sided cañon. The noise of his shot aroused a bull moose which rushed from the brush and charged him. He had

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but one shot, and had fired that at the bear. He climbed a small tree to get away from the moose. The moose stood at the foot of the tree raging at him. He didn't say just how mooses rage. I don't know.

It was bitterly cold, with deep snow on the ground. He had with him a bulldog which, according to him, was a wonderful game-trailer. The bulldog got onto the back of the moose. He didn't say if the dog used a ladder or no to get up there by. Whether the moose hide was too thick for the dog to bite through he didn't say, but apparently the dog was unable to do much with the moose, and he ordered it down from aloft and sent it to camp for help. By the time the camp cook arrived on the scene, brought by the bulldog (the cook was the only man in camp when the dog arrived there), he himself was about frozen.

The cook came armed with only a long meat knife, and with said knife he slew the moose; being able to approach it unawares, owing to its wrath with the man in the tree. It was a very little tree, and hardly big enough to hold him. The cook had to cut the tree down with the big meat knife before he could get the half-frozen fellow down. It happened in Wyoming.

I THINK some of these big game hunters must be blanked liars. Anyway that's the tale, vouched for as gospel. I leave it to you.

The descriptions of my kid and wife tally with mine of the little spotted fawn. If it hadn't been that I was at a sharp bend, and crowded by the busses astern, I might have stopped and had a better look at him. It's —— to be ignorant, eh?—Cheeroh, and good-luck."—BILL ADAMS, Modesto, Calif.

"P.S.—There is, as you know, a one-way control on that grade; so that I could not pull up and let the other fellows pass me by. I asked them when at the top of the grade if they'd seen any game on the way up, and they hadn't.

I forgot to mention that that fellow killed the grizzly with his one shot."

Reply, by Mr. Harriman:—Your description of the fawn indicates the young of a white tail deer. I have seen them often in the hardwood timber of my old home, Minnesota. At times playing with each other exactly as lambs do in a pasture, jumping up on logs or over each other.

Your bear story reminds me of one told me by MacDuffee of Chloride. Mac was one of my dearest friends and gave me his old Sharps 110-45 buffalo gun. It was while I was examining this gun that he told it.

"Ye see, Big Jim, this fellow hunted and trapped and prospected, all over four States, and he had had a lot of adventures. He used a gun like mine and one day when we met he began to yarn about long shots and close shots and wild shots and all the rest. After he had killed several lone buffalo at a mile and a half, to beat my record of one mile, he started on bear stories. He was plumb full of bear stories, to his chin.

" 'One time,' says he. 'I was up in the mountains of Colorado after meat and I shot a buck. He dropped and I flipped the guard down to slip in another shell, but afore I could yank one out of my belt, I heerd a roar right clost and I jumped. In fact I jumped twice.

" 'First jump carried me just far enough to clear me and let me see a wallopin' big silvertip comin' fer me. Next jump I left my gun on the ground and started up a tree. At the time I had a fifty-pound pack on my shoulders, but I never knowed it was there until I set astraddle of a limb, forty foot up, lookin' down at that there silvertip.

" 'Well, sir! That——bear stood there a-watchin' me and when he see I'd lodged permanent, he picked up my old Sharp's, worked the lever two-three times, squinted through the barrel to see how dirty she was and then I'm —— if he didn't make signs fer me to throw him a shell er two, so he could try a potshot at me.' "

That is the difference between California grizzly bear and the Rocky Mountain silvertip. Or is it the difference in liars?

I never had any grizzly bear chase me.

My friend Al Corson and two others started out from Pueblo, Col., on their way to Wet Mt. On the way they were warned that Old Mose, who had killed several men, was around there. They walked until dark and long after the moon came out. By and by they heard a noise and one man shinned up a tree to look. He reported a dark object moving down the mountain toward them and the other two did some shinning on same tree. There they stuck, until after midnight, hearing noises and afraid to get down. Finally, Al slid down, sat on the ground and built a tiny fire between his legs, his back to this tree. He dozed off and the other men, getting cold, slid down. One landed astride Al's neck and he yelled murder. The last man lit on the second and all three fell over.

Then they investigated and found the bear that had kept them up a tree for hours was a brindle cow. Oh, squash!

AS FOR moose, one chased a chap up a tree who worked with me up in Oregon. Kept him there two hours, while the young fellow's uncle stood on a hill and shouted advice to him, thinking it a big joke.

You see a bull moose fighting mad once, and you will believe it is no joke to be the object of his wrath.

No antelope in Yosemite as far as I know. White tail deer's baby calling "Ma-a-a-a!" is what you saw. Mule deer so named on account of his ears. He has a black tail and is often known as Blacktail deer.

Names and addresses of department editors and the exact field covered by each section are given in the next issue of the magazine. Do NOT write to the magazine itself.

"ASK ADVENTURE" editors are appointed with extreme care. If you can meet our exacting requirements and qualify as an expert on some topic or territory not now covered, we shall be glad to talk matters over with you. Address JOSEPH COX, *Adventure*, New York.

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Old Songs That Men Have Sung

Devoted to outdoor songs, preferably hitherto unprinted—songs of the sea, the lumber-camps, Great Lakes, the West, old canal days, the negro, mountains, the pioneers, etc. Send in what you have or find, so that all may share in them.

Although this department is conducted primarily for the collection and preservation of old songs, the editor will give information about modern ones when he can do so and *IF* all requests are accompanied with self-addressed envelop and reply postage (*NOT* attached). Write to Mr. Gordon direct, *NOT* to the magazine.

Conducted by R. W. GORDON, care of *Adventure*, Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York City.

THE response to requests made some time ago for information concerning the historic facts underlying the two songs, "Casey Jones" and "Frankie and Johnnie," has been generous and continued. More than fifty texts of the latter song have been sent in, and at least a dozen readers have included fairly full accounts of the origin, or supposed origin, of the story.

No two accounts, however, have agreed either as to the place where the shooting occurred or as to the names of the persons involved, and for that reason it has been impossible so far for me to make any final decision or to award the promised subscription to *Adventure*. Two or three of the accounts given seem to be wildly fantastic, the rest are all plausible but lack specific details that can be verified by court records. I'm still hoping that one of you will send in the lacking facts and that the perplexing history may be explained.

MORE decisive results have been obtained regarding "Casey Jones." The clearest and best account came from *Mr. Edmund O'Malley* of Chicago, a personal friend of Casey. Here are the essential facts contained in his letter:

"I am enclosing a newspaper clipping from the *News Scimitar* published in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1912, giving a account of the origin of the song. The information contained in this clipping was written twelve years after the death of Casey Jones, and shortly after the song had become popular.

"This song was composed, as stated, by Wallace Sanders, a negro coal heaver at Canton, Mississippi. I heard him sing it there in the year 1900. The original song was about six verses, and was eulogistic and heroic in character. It was the negro's method of showing his appreciation of Casey Jones the man, and a friend of everybody.

"The writer was a round house machinist for the Illinois Central Railroad at that point and was in daily contact with both Casey Jones, the engineer, and Wallace Sanders, the coal heaver. Within a short time the song had been changed until there had been injected into it verses that the friends of Casey Jones, of whom the writer was one, resented, and we forbade it being sung at all. I heard little of it until I saw it published in Chicago in 1910.

"I first met John Luther Jones, better known as Casey Jones, when he was employed by the Mobile and Ohio Railroad at Jackson, Tennessee, in the year 1887, and in the last three or four years preceding his death was in daily contact with him in our lines of duty. The accident which resulted in his death was not his fault, but the fault of others. I was one of a committee of three that received his body at Canton, Mississippi, and prepared it for shipment to Jackson, Tennessee, where his wife and children resided. The other two gentlemen on the committee were engineers of the Illinois Central Railroad, William Bosma and Homer English. . .

"Casey Jones was a man of sterling qualities, one of the best and most popular engineers, and my object in writing this letter is to clear up in the minds of people who are interested some of the facts about him as a man, and also the authorship of the song.

"The term *rounders* used in some of the verses and also other terms applied in various parodies would create the impression that he was unstable and reckless. Such was not the case. He was sober, reliable, loyal and friendly with everybody and of a smiling, pleasant disposition, which won him friends wherever he went.

"I do not think I am the only one who knows what I have written above; there are thousands who will read your inquiry who know practically all I have stated, but they may not take the trouble to write you as fully as I have. . . .

"The subject of the song was indeed my friend, 'Casey Jones'—gentleman."

I'm glad to say that after a fairly careful checking up I am convinced that the account given above is accurate in all respects, and that as a tangible token of our appreciation, Mr. O'Malley will find a copy of *Adventure* on his desk every ten days during the next year.

I wonder if any one knows whether Wallace Sanders (or Saunders as it is sometimes spelled) is still alive, or can remember the exact text of the song as he originally composed it. I should like to be able to compare this first version with later ones.

SEVERAL excellent examples of "blues" have come in recently from readers. The two printed below were captured in 1915 from the singing of a negro chef at Dodge City, Kansas.

The Train I Ride

(*Text of R. P. Matthews*)

When a woman—oh, Lawd Gawd—I mean a woman
—gits the blues,
She jes' tucks her head—and she cries—
When a woman gits the blues she cries.

When a man—oh, Lawd Gawd—I mean a man—
gits the blues,
He jes' grabs a train—and he rides—
When a m-a-a-n gits the blues he rides.

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If you don' lak muh—oh, Lawd Gawd—I mean muh peaches—
Ef you don't lak muh peaches don' you shake muh t-r-e-e.

CHORUS: *Oh, de train I ride,*
Oh, de train I ride,
Don' tak no water here.
Oh, de gal I love,
Oh, de gal I love
Lives farther down the line.

Marie Blues

(*Text of R. P. Matthews*)

My father was a jockey and he rode a horse that w-o-nnnn;
He had a way of riding that a green man can't catch o-nnnn.

If you lose your woman by jumping all aro-u-n-dddd,
Just square yourself and go to hanging round the t-o-w-nnnn.

I hates to see that evening sun go d-o-w-nnnn;
It makes me think I'm on my last road h-o-mmmme.

Steamboats on the river named the Sweet M-a-r-i-eeee
Hear the paddles churning, she's a sailing down to the s-eeeee-a
The lights burn low, I led a life of s-i-nnnn,
If you don't think I'm dying, babe, just looky what a fix I'm i-nnnn.

NOW a final word about the trip. Most of my equipment has already arrived, and by the time that this issue appears on the stands I shall be on the road. Obviously I shall be unable to carry with me my reference library or any of the numerous copies of songs that have come in to the department during the last three years. As a result I shall not be able, often, to answer inquiries from you as fully as I should like to, or to send transcripts of songs requested.

Please, however, don't stop sending in contributions of songs. They will be forwarded promptly if you address them in the care of *Adventure* (see below) and I'll try to acknowledge them, perhaps by postcards with photographs taken on the trip. Remember that whatever is of value and interest in this department is due almost entirely to your cooperation in sending in texts; my part is merely to see that as much as possible of what you send gets eventually to the printer.

ADDRESS all communications to R. W. GORDON, care of *Adventure Magazine*, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City.

THE TRAIL AHEAD

NOVEMBER 20TH ISSUE

Besides the **three complete novelettes** mentioned on the second contents page of this issue, the next *Adventure* will bring you the following stories:

THE CONTEST MAN — *Alan LeMay*
The new cowpuncher wore beautiful clothes.

WHAT MAKES A SAILORMAN — *Ralph R. Perry*
His shipmates called him a farmer.

THE BORDER BREED Part IV — *Hugh Pendexter*
"Tippecanoe and Tyler too!"

SAFE-CONDUCT — *Barry Scobee*
The sheriff was afraid of himself.

ROUTINE *An Off-the-Trail Story* — *Vance H. Morris*
An alarm on the destroyer.

THE CABIN AND THE SPRING — *Leslie McFarlane*
Hate in the forest fire.

STILL FARTHER AHEAD

THE THREE ISSUES following the next will contain *long* stories by J. Allan Dunn, Harold Lamb, Leonard H. Nason, E. S. Pladwell, David R. Sparks, Talbot Mundy, T. S. Stribling, Thomson Burtis, Elmer Brown Mason, Leslie McFarlane, and W. C. Tuttle; and short stories by Captain Dingle, Wilkeson O'Connell, Brian Johns, Julia Joseph, Robert Carse, Hal Borland, John Webb, S. B. H. Hurst, Larry Barretto and others.

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